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LANGFIER.

LADY MURIEL ERSKINE.

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THE Journal for all interested in

Country Life and Country Pursuits

CONTENTS.

	PAGE
Our Portrait Illustration: Lady Muriel Erskine	289, 290
Clearing Away the Rubbish	290
Country Notes	291
The Waterloo Cup. (Illustrated)	293
On Norwegian Rivers. (Illustrated)	294
Farming in Persia	295
Value of Shire Horses. (Illustrated)	296
"Chuck and Chance II" Trout Streams. (Illustrated)	297
A Neglected Sporting Bird	299
George Herbert's House and Garden. (Illustrated)	300
In the Garden	302
Gardens Old and New: Wolfeton House. (Illustrated)	304
Things About Our Neighbourhood	309
A Ploughing Match	310
Childwick Farm Stock. (Illustrated)	311
Wild Country Life	313
Racing Notes	314
Books of the Day. (Illustrated)	315
Their Majesties at Mount Edgumbe. (Illustrated)	317
On the Green	318
Correspondence	319

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"CLEARING AWAY THE RUBBISH"

TO criticise the action of a body which has so often shown its public spirit as the Corporation of London is not a grateful task, but there is room for hoping that by merely pointing out the blunders now being committed in the management of the famous Burnham Beeches the way will be opened to their rectification. The Corporation is, to some extent, dependent on its subordinates, and these, to put the case in a nutshell, appear to think that a public woodland ought to be treated according to the strict principles of forestry for timber. Accordingly, there is a disposition to belittle the artists who are protesting so energetically; but, on the face of it, the artists ought to speak with authority. Burnham Beeches are not kept for the purpose of growing timber, or to afford practical lessons in forestry. An immense majority of the visitors are attracted by the wild beauty of the woodland, and to discover and reproduce this is the business of an artist. Whether the policy pursued would stand the test of applying the deeper principles of forestry is a question. Experience tells us that the tendency is for ground to become sick of any one crop, and the more ancient and distorted beeches tell how long this particular tree has been extracting its nourishment from it. Nature itself appears to favour a change, since young birches and oaks thrive amazingly, while the striding beeches have now to be carefully nursed. Yet they are not endeavouring even here to work on uniform lines. There are three trees especially that tend to sow themselves and multiply, viz., the birch, the hawthorn, and the holly. Now, the first of these, "the lady of the woods," as Dorothy Wordsworth called it, is pre-eminently an artist's tree, and, with its white stole and trembling graceful leaves none is more beautiful. But the woodman

hates it. He defines the birch as a thing that comes where it is not wanted, and has laid low some hundreds of fine specimens. On the other hand, he cherishes the holly, which is by no means very beautiful in a mixed woodland, though nothing is to be said against a grove of hollies. They do not in the slightest improve the look of Burnham Beeches. Nor does the hawthorn, which also has been consistently spared.

What they call "clearing away the rubbish" is a system very consistently followed. No doubt if the woodland were worked for profit, thinning would have to be done consistently; but what may appear to be rubbish from the utilitarian standpoint need not necessarily be so æsthetically. Many of the crooked trees have been cut down, and where three shoots come from one root it is common to find two shorn away, the aim apparently being to produce a woodland of tall, straight trees, with no undergrowth. If any æsthetic considerations have been at work, it has been in the making of "vistas," clearing a long avenue, with some insignificant object, such as a "deputy tree," at the end of it. Also, wherever possible, the survivors are left in straight rows, as trees are planted in a game covert. But all this shows a gross misapprehension. The Beeches do not cover any large space, and the feeling of illusion, of mystery, of suggestiveness is due entirely to the bewildering undergrowth. Take it away, and at once you reduce an exquisitely beautiful woodland to a commonplace and ordinary plantation. It is urged, however, that the ground always tends to produce more trees than it can grow, but that is doubtful, since "the forest primeval" goes on flourishing for centuries, the leaves extracting from the atmosphere more than the roots take from the earth. Only to give it a chance, vigorous measures should be adopted to prevent the removal of a single barrowful of leaf-mould. Apparently those responsible do not intend to rest content till you can see from end to end, and the tall trees in rows have no relief, except here and there a mass of holly. Nowhere does one feel this more than in the method of dealing with the ponds. Everybody knows that these pools are particularly beautiful, but the fact has been carefully disregarded. For instance, it is the practice to erect in the middle of lakes a huge board, like those used near the railway for advertising soap and pills, with the legend "Bathing not permitted." This could as easily, save for a perverse leaning to ugliness, be placed on the margin. Again, most of the glamour of these pools depends on the waving saplings and bushes, which it is coolly proposed to remove. Nothing is omitted to the realisation of an ideal of hideous neatness.

On a similar principle they do not seem to like to see the brooks wimpling down a natural channel in the forest glades, but must dig them into the shape of a gutter or open drain. If there is a dell full of the wild feeling of remoteness and separation imparted by its rough undergrowth, what they say is, "Clear away the rubbish and make it plain and neat." Perhaps the more charitable explanation is that, in its generosity, the Corporation employs far too many men, and they must be doing something. Those who direct them have drawn their experience chiefly from public parks and timber. What they do not understand is, that the greatest charm of our public woodlands—the New Forest, Epping Forest, Burnham Beeches—lies in their naturalness. Our public parks are well enough in their place. They are the lungs of town, and every artifice is properly employed to make them neat and clean and comfortable for the citizen to walk in. Formal flower-beds, isolated trees, rolled gravel paths, gutters and drains are in place there. And on a gentleman's estate timber, as a rule, does not receive the scientific care it deserves. Beauty there is secondary, though it is, in a measure, gained by regular planting and uniformity. A plantation wholly composed of oaks, birches, cedars, or pines has an austere comeliness of its own, akin to that which Nature produces when she spreads out a bed of blue speedwell or causes many acres of corn to blush with poppy. Not so those fine possessions of the City of London—Epping Forest and Burnham Beeches. There Nature works otherwise, and her beauty is largely one of careless negligence. You may see in either of them glades such as might have been in Arden when the Duke and his company "fleted the time carelessly as they did in the golden age." To preserve something of this charm, so that the careworn citizen may, in his hours of leisure, fall back into the very arms of Nature, is surely the finest ideal to aim at, but it never can be realised by adopting the formulae of the professional forester and a ruthless application of his axe and pruning-knife.

Our Portrait Illustration.

LADY MURIEL AGNES STUART ERSKINE is the subject of our frontispiece this week. She is the daughter of the fourteenth Earl of Buchan, who married Rosalie Louisa, daughter of the late Captain Sartoris of Hopsford Hall, Coventry. The Earl of Buchan's country seats are Gogmagog Hills, Cambridge, and Amondon House, Linlithgow.



LORD KITCHENER'S fuller account of the mishap to Von Donop's convoy escort shows it to have been one of the gravest we have encountered for some time in South Africa. The casualty list includes five officers and forty-five men killed, and at least eight officers and about 120 privates wounded. We need not pay much heed to the prisoners, of whom there appear to have been over 600, because the majority—perhaps by this time all—have been set at liberty. It appears that the Boers, hearing of the rather weak escort, by forced marches got a force of from 1,200 to 1,700 men on the field, that is to say, about ten miles from Klerksdorp, and then by a harassing series of charges managed to stampede the mules, and in the confusion overpowered the separated items of the convoy in a fight that lasted two hours. This in any case would have been regarded as an incident of the most regrettable nature, and it is all the more so because to some extent it will undo the moral effect of the "big drive," which must otherwise have proved most disheartening. It is curious that in the latter case the Boers appear to have acted like men who had lost heart, while in the offensive operations they displayed more than usual energy and spirit.

Badminton, where the Prince and Princess of Wales were guests upon their way to Bristol early in the week, is emphatically one of the stately homes of England. It is not, perhaps, very beautiful, but its vast size, its wide façade, its noble park, with avenues stretching straight away, apparently into boundless space, its huge walled garden of twelve acres, where broad herbaceous borders fringe the vegetable plots, make it one of the most imposing houses in England. Hard by the house, too, is the quiet churchyard in which, but a few years ago, was laid to rest that most complete of really noble sportsmen, and that most courteous and kindly of men, the late Duke of Beaufort.

In Badminton—the village—lingers all that is best of the feudal feeling. It nestles round the great house, being itself a cluster of soundly-built stone houses with many a pretty garden. The welfare of the horses in the stables—both are among the finest in England, for the present Duke is a keen sportsman and the reverse of a featherweight—is a matter of paramount importance. The hounds, magnificently kennelled, dominate the village, and matters of national importance seem to be of comparative insignificance to their welfare. That is not the view of the great house, but of the village, and it is the fruit of kindly feeling between landlord and tenants, which cannot be surpassed, though we are glad to say it can be equalled, in England.

Among the annual events of the last quarter of a century needs to be numbered the New Year's Eve address of Mr. Frederic Harrison at Newton Hall, Fetter Lane. Here the well-known Positivist used to hold forth on the events of the year, the names and achievements of its dead, and the new ways to perdition found out by a misguided nation. It was all a little cranky, and, sooth to say, the deliverance of Mr. Harrison on mundane affairs, his criticisms of books and judgment of men, did not inspire the highest reverence for his class of mind. Yet he was an ancient institution, and it was always amusing to know his views. The Scottish Corporation, however, to whom the property belongs, have taken it over for their own use, and Mr. Frederic Harrison seized the occasion to make a farewell bow to a world of which he has so long been an ornament. He is going, so we hear, to return to the country, where we hope he will enjoy many years of philosophic career, to perform what rites belong to the religion of humanity. He is a seer whose prophecies have not always been pleasant to hear, but no nation is healthy that cannot bear criticism from every side, and he occasionally illustrated a truth that might otherwise have been neglected.

At the annual meeting of the Bird Protection Society, the advisability of introducing into England a Bird and Arbor Day in commemoration of King Edward VII.'s coronation was

discussed. It was agreed to begin by choosing two counties, one in the North of England and one in the South, and introducing a Bird and Arbor Day in each, trusting the movement to spread to the neighbouring counties and so gradually becoming a feature of English life, as it has become a feature of Canadian life and that of the United States. It was also agreed to offer prizes for essays by school children on what they knew of animal and plant life, the awarding of the prizes to be commemorated by planting a tree. This will, no doubt, be the beginning of a movement, for whose inauguration England will, no doubt, one day thank the Bird Protection Society, which will be the means of not only increasing our fruit and timber supply, but of instilling a greater love and knowledge of Nature into the people.

It really seems more than a pity that the King's Champion should be abolished. For this is the account of his equipment, which conveys the impression of a fine and picturesque figure. A suit of armour from the King's Armoury, complete; a pair of gauntlets, a sword and hanger, a case of pistols; an oval target with the Champion's own arms painted thereon; a lance, gilt all over, fringed above and below the handle, for his esquires; one rich great horse saddle, or field saddle, with head-stall, reins, breastplate, and crupper, with daggs and trappings richly trimmed with gold and silver lace, fringed; and great and small tassels, with a pair of very large Spanish stirrups and stirrup-leathers, lined with velvet and gold and silver lace; a bit, with silver and gilt bosses; a pair of holsters lined with velvet and laced with gold and silver, and a pair of holster caps, laced and fringed; a plume of red, blue, and white feathers, the colours of the three nations, containing eighteen falls, with a hearne top; one plume of feathers for the head-stall and dock, and two trumpet banners of his own arms.

The times are hard, although the nation and the national resources have responded marvellously to the needs of a critical occasion. But no matter how hard they might be, we think that response would surely be made with generosity to that appeal which Sir Clements Markham put forward, not for the first time at a meeting one evening last week of the Royal Geographical Society. His appeal was for funds to equip a ship to go out to the relief of the *Discovery*, which set out under Captain Scott on its voyage of Antarctic exploration from Lyttelton. The estimated cost of equipping and sending out the relief ship is £20,000, of which half only had been subscribed at the date of the meeting addressed by Sir Clements Markham, and that in spite of the generosity of Mr. Longstaff, who has supplemented his munificent contribution to the original ship by a further donation of £5,000 towards the expenses of the relief vessel.

It is impossible to view with indifference the fate that by universal consent seems to menace the fisheries of that most beautiful river the Usk, and a letter addressed to the *Times* of February 26th is worthy of notice. Already the Usk has pathetically been referred to as a dying river, and it seems that the local authorities have not the means to avert its imminent decease, and that the attention of more centralised authorities is occupied otherwise. Mr. John Lloyd writes to the *Times* in order to inform all who may be willing to take an interest in the river's preservation, that a fund is being raised privately for this purpose (so far as it is possible to achieve it) by some of the property owners immediately concerned, and that Mr. Reginald Herbert, of Clytha, is taking an active part in the matter, and would gratefully receive support in any form; £600 have been already subscribed. A scheme for the protection of a river so renowned for its beauties perhaps may command more than local sympathy, and should commend itself to the attention of many lovers of the picturesque.

One can only read with relief that after so much delay, so many false reports and abortive attempts at succour, Miss Stone and her companion, Madame Tsilka, whose baby will be able to claim one of the most peculiar of birthplaces, are at last released from durance vile. Miss Stone has an injured knee through falling from a stumbling horse while blindfolded, but otherwise the party seem to be in good health. The hardships which they have undergone have been considerable—living in caves sometimes among the snow of almost inaccessible mountains, hurried from one place to another, blindfolded and on horseback, and threatened with death if the brigands were discovered. Not the least of their hardships was the total want of occupation, which, however, was removed when Madame Tsilka's baby was born. The brigands brought them to within three miles from Strumnitz on the morning of February 23rd, where they were shown the way to the village and left. As they were sworn to divulge nothing that might lead to the brigands being taken, and threatened with death if they did so, Miss Stone and Madame Tsilka will not be able to help the Government in their attempts to recover the money given as ransom.

The University crews never perhaps have had such bad weather for their practice. For a while all rowing was too dangerous to be attempted, on account of the "icebergs" in the river, and later they have had abundance of rain. All these hard conditions, however, make for good watermanship—that quality in which Cambridge, having the disadvantage of the smaller river, so often is found wanting. Of two good boats, this year the Oxford boat seems to be better. Torpids at Oxford were more blocked by ice than we remember them before, and our memory of Torpids goes back farther than we like to reckon. There were days when racing had to be given up altogether. In the result there were no very striking changes in the order of the boats.

Mr. MacLaren's team has lost the last of the test matches, but the Australians had already won the rubber. It was an exciting match, with small scores on either side. Australia made a first innings of 144, and England followed with 189, thus scoring a lead of 45. Next time Australia made 255, and England could only get 168. Under the circumstances, it cannot be argued that the tour has been a brilliant success. Nor did it ever really deserve to be, as the team in no wise represented the strength of the Mother Country. In batting, for instance, how it could have been strengthened by the addition of Prince Ranjitsinhji, Mr. Fry, and Mr. Stanley Jackson, while the bowling with Rhodes and Hirst! No exaggeration is employed when we assert that it would easily be possible to get together another team, or even two teams, capable of beating that on tour.

GLORY OF THE SNOW.

Bushes are bare of roses now,
And naked still is every bough;
But in the winter-pallid grass
A flash of colour as I pass
Draws me: two sapphire rings I see
Through dead brown leaves shine up at me,
And in the deep blue flowers I know
The bluest flowers that ever earth
Brought in the whole long year to birth—
The sapphire Glory of the Snow.

Each flower's six-pointed like a star,
And splashed with white the petals are;
The honey-coloured pistil shows
What way the first brown hive-bee goes
When he starts out upon his quest
Of honey from a blossom's breast.
'Tis he crocus in the grass stands up,
But all too cold's her amber cup;
And rather would the hive-bee try
This blue flower coloured like the sky.

He presses close, he drinks, and fain
Would enter in and drink again,
So sweet's this honey that is stored
In cups of sapphire on earth's board,
New set with grass that's newly green,
Sprinkled with daisies scarcely seen,
And half unfolded. He would see
This honey hived for none but he;
The moth's a beggar; vanity
Itself goes as a butterfly.

But this blue flower's as kind to give
As her sweet life is short to live;
The sun that looks on Easter Day
Must see her beauty pass away.

Petal by petal she shall blow
Away like dust of sapphires, trod
Under the heel of some strong god;
And nothing shall be left to show
How fair she was, unless a song
Shall keep her soul a summer long,
Till even June's proud larkspurs know
How blue was Glory of the Snow.

NORA CHESON.

Some years ago Fellows of the Zoological Society were perturbed by the news that one large and valuable snake had devoured another, also a valuable specimen, and the Press passed unqualified condemnation of the larger reptile's greed, whereas in fact the limitations of its recurved teeth, which, however capable of taking hold, are but indifferent at letting go, were wholly to blame. A still more sensational case is reported from the gardens at Nîmes, where a tessellated snake, measuring about 38 in., devoured within a week a black-marked snake only three-quarters of an inch less and a viperine snake of some 17 in. The larger victim was regurgitated ten hours later and almost entire, but the second was retained and duly digested. The former could not have been in exactly prime condition, for it had not, at the time of its death, touched food for 393 days. One of the viperine snakes in the Nîmes collection, though not the one in question, had previously fasted for 464 days. It seems in accordance with the reptilian appetite to veer between the extremes of abstinence and gorging.

After a series of rather barren years, it seems as though the Waterloo Cup had once again in Farndon Ferry brought to the front a dog that is calculated to strike the popular imagination. His win, if we may judge from the betting, was no fluke, since his backers never seem to have hesitated an instant about keeping him as first favourite. Yet his previous record was not such as to have inspired this confidence in any mere student of form. At the Border Union Meeting in October the hare not only ran him to a standstill, but for between five and six hours afterwards he lay exhausted and apparently unconscious, hovering between life and death. In the Cup he won all his races most brilliantly, and won with ease till he came to the last, which proved to be one of the most exciting courses ever witnessed, and the issue was in doubt to the very end. Thus his victory was not quite so clean as those that raised Master McGrath and Fullerton out of the mere coursing circle and endeared them to the British public. But he is very young yet, and should he retain his health and form, he bids fair to have the name of Farndon Ferry enshrined with theirs.

The connection between seats in public parks and the dissemination of disease has been raised by a correspondent in a very timely manner. We may expect occasional mild days now that March has come, and as spring goes on the beggar and the tramp are always more and more disposed to make the parks their promenade and their seats a lounge. Often they suffer from disease without knowing it, oftener still they know without caring. From the doss-house at which they passed the previous night it is easily possible for them to bring the germs of disease. Yet whoever rests for a moment on a park seat risks catching something left there by the previous occupant. It seems to be expected by those who have made the matter a study that small-pox is not unlikely to spread still more than it has done with the advent of the spring, so that everything tends to increase the danger. Those who are fastidious will probably avoid this danger by the simple expedient of keeping away from the seats, but even the heedless need to be warned, and will do well to realise the danger.

March came in like one of its own lambs, and the soft warm weather seemed quickly to bring forward the signs of early spring—grey little jewel points on the hawthorn sprays, of leaf on the honeysuckle, half-formed buds on a million bushes. The birds are rapidly developing the love instinct of spring, male wild duck and moorhen chasing the females on the lakes, wood-pigeons courting in the wood. On "the windy tall elm tree" the rook has long been established, and by his annual tournaments and battles has settled about the various dusky brides for one year more. March not infrequently brings with it snow and blizzards, but somehow the birds and flowers appear not to be greatly disturbed, and you may often hear a great noise of singing birds while the ground still is white with snow, as if by constant iteration they hoped to make it true that winter is over and gone. Also, the farmer has wakened up after the hard frost, and gladly recognises that the weather could not be better for ploughing and preparing his seed-beds, or for forwarding the young lambs now to be seen in the meadows.

There has always been a desire to acclimatise the eland, the largest and most ox-like of all antelopes, and the only one which puts on fat. Though it has been reared for generations in Paris, and herds have been formed in English parks, the eland has not proved a profitable beast. It wastes too much grass, and does not mature quickly. But the Queensland Agricultural Board has a scheme for using them which sounds promising. There is an immense quantity of useless bush in the colony which cattle will not graze, and which cannot be kept thinned by artificial means. Elands are fonder of grazing on bushes than grass, and eat dry and arid bush fodder by preference. The belief is that if imported into Queensland they would "fend for themselves," and feed down a large amount of superfluous bush. There is this in favour of the idea—that there are no indigenous carnivora to kill off the eland calves, and that there is much in common between the vegetation of a good deal of the eland country and that of Queensland. They flourish in the Kalahari Desert, where water is generally absent.

February and March are the two "famine" months of the English year. Natural food is at its lowest quantity, the supplies having been drawn on during the whole winter, and spring not having replenished them. When, as has happened this season, severe cold sets in at any time in these eight weeks, the effect on wild life is likely to be disastrous, especially to birds. Pheasants should be fed liberally at this time, or the hens will not lay well, and the cocks will stray anywhere in search of food. Partridges suffer even more than pheasants,

for they are out in the unsheltered fields, and, as it is not the custom to feed them, they soon become thin and weak, and possibly the seeds of disease are sown. Where any head of rabbits is kept up turnips should be given; in enclosed warrens this is absolutely necessary. Partridges which can obtain absolutely no insect food would do vastly better on well-preserved manors if they were artificially fed during the spells of severe cold or dry east wind.

Fishing through the ice is against the law in most countries, and the illegality of the practice is none the less clear in the case of Canadian brook trout because its application is somewhat indirect, the close time lasting from the end of September until the beginning of May, or over the ice period. The fish which is most easily taken through the ice is the wall-eyed pike, pike-perch, or doré (it has many other *aliases*), and the Indians are said to be particularly expert in its capture, protecting them-

selves against the cold by spreading a blanket over both them and the ice-hole. An American journal tells a story in which a large brook trout, which had long refused the bait, rushed so eagerly at the bait just as the angler was withdrawing it that it came through the ice-hole and landed itself outside.

Experiments have lately been made in Chicago for the purpose of ascertaining to what extent a covering of snow on the ground is effective in lessening the contamination of the atmosphere by germs. Shallow dishes containing the preparation used in making germ cultures were exposed to the air in ten different places for three minutes, when there was no snow on the ground. The average number of germ colonies in each dish, after allowing time for incubation, was 630. The experiment was repeated after a fall of snow equal to a quarter of an inch of rainfall, and the average number of germ colonies was found to be only sixty-six.

THE WATERLOO CUP.

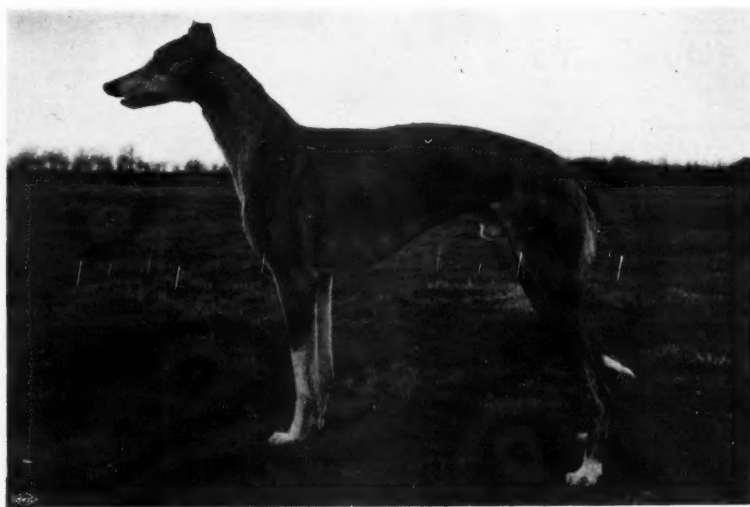
WHETHER it was due to the postponement owing to frost, a by no means unusual occurrence, by the way, or other causes the nature of which can be surmised, the fact remains that the Waterloo Cup this year appeared to possess less public interest than its immediate predecessors. At the same time, there was a very fair attendance present on the east side of the Withins on Wednesday morning when proceedings began; and yet the weather was cold and biting, whilst it may be added that the keen wind which swept the ground was far from beneficial to the sport. Still worse than this was the very indifferent quality of the earliest hares which came to hand, the result being that the trials which put out Colonel Holmes's Hot Pickle, Sir T. Brocklebank's Bridge of Arta, Mr. F. Alexander's Auspice Favente, Sir R. Graham's Brave Baden, Mr. W. S. Simpson's Strange Fate, and Sir W. Ingram's Happy Already, were for the most part extremely unsatisfactory. As the sport progressed, however, matters mended somewhat, though Wilkinson, who, by the way, was slipping magnificently, was compelled to let many weak hares go by; and so upon the whole the day ended more pleasantly than seemed probable at the start.

Reviewing the proceedings briefly, it may be observed that the chief feature of the running on the first day was the fine form displayed by the favourite, Mr. G. F. Fawcett's Farndon Ferry, the brindle and white, by Fiery Furnace out of Fair Florence, who, it may be remembered, was generally regarded as having been unlucky last year when the Cup was won by his kennel companion, Fearless Footsteps. At the same time the crack was fairly held in the second round by Mr. R. Anderton's fawn bitch puppy Athel as they left the slips, though he led her full three lengths for the turn and then put in some brilliant work before he killed in fine



THE DUKE OF LEEDS CRITICISING HIS CARD.

to imagine; and so the company, which had improved considerably in numbers, were enabled to enjoy a really good day's sport. Farndon Ferry and Glenbervie were the first greyhounds to go to slips, but the favourite never gave his opponent a ghost of a



Photos.

FARNDON FERRY, WINNER OF THE CUP.

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style. Wednesday, however, was not a lucky day for the puppies, as at the end of the proceedings only three of them were left in, the best of the trio by far being Mr. W. Ward's red dog, Wartnaby, who showed both speed and cleverness, and, as will be seen later, eventually finished by running up in the final to Farndon Ferry. Mr. H. Bednal's Blackheath, a very unlucky dog last year, also displayed fine form in his trials with Public Right and Marauder, whilst Dr. Rutherford Harris's Lady Husheen beat Rutherford and Future Faith with enough in hand to confirm the high opinions which many good judges had formed of her merits when she ran for the Cup twelve months ago, though it must be admitted that in the latter trial the hare favoured her a good deal. Mr. H. T. Michael's Sea Fog also went well on the first day, as did the popular Mr. T. Graham's Grafter, by that good dog Gallant.

Everything was pleasanter on the second day, for in the first place there was a great improvement in the weather, whilst the hares were just as different from those which came to hand on Wednesday as it is possible to imagine; and so the company, which had improved considerably in numbers, were enabled to enjoy a really good day's sport. Farndon Ferry and Glenbervie were the first greyhounds to go to slips, but the favourite never gave his opponent a ghost of a chance, and was indulged in a bye in the fourth round, owing to Handsome John having been run to death by a demon of a hare when he met and defeated Wild Wind in the third round. The interest in the proceedings was, however, well kept up by the anticipation of an exciting meeting between Sea Fog and Wartnaby after the latter had disposed of Garbitas very meritoriously in the third round, and had not the former extinguished his chances of raising the flag by a premature kill, the puppy might very probably have failed to get his place in the last four, though as it was he won with something to



Photo. WARTNABY, THE RUNNER-UP FOR THE CUP. *Copyright*

spare. Sea Fog, however, though beaten, was not disgraced, and the style in which he had just before put out Lady Husheen in the third round proved him to be a good sterling greyhound. Grafter scarcely appeared to display the fire and dash which characterised his running on the opening day, his victory over Dutiful Daughter in the fourth round being generally regarded as the result of extreme good luck; but, on the other hand, Blackheath defeated Little Maiden and China Craze so handsomely that his party began to believe that he might prove equal to tackling Farndon Ferry successfully in the final.

The hopes of his friends, however, did not influence the prospects of Blackheath on Friday morning, as he failed to raise his flag when he met the puppy Wartnaby, who beat him pointlessly; and as the favourite had previously disposed of Grafter equally easily, Mr. Fawcett's Farndon Ferry and Mr. W. Ward's Wartnaby went to slips for the final, the former just defeating the young red by a very narrow margin after a long give-and-take trial. The success of the favourite was immensely popular, for though his owner has of late enjoyed many of the good things of the coursing world, his luck for many years was certainly not proportionate to the sums he spent upon his greyhound kennel; but all things come to him who waits, and no one grudged him the victory.

Farndon Ferry, it may be remembered, ran up to his kennel companion, Fearless Footsteps, last year, the latter filling the nomination of Mr. J. Hartley Bibby. This season he has only been out once, this being in the Netherby Cup, at the Border Union Meeting, when, after winning one course, he fell down insensible in a trial with Grafter. Beyond a doubt his victory was an instance of the best dog winning, and it may be added that of the last three left in, Wartnaby and Blackheath are both Lancashire greyhounds, whilst Grafter hails from Cumberland. The runner-up, Wartnaby, is a particularly promising puppy, and fairly bustling the favourite in the final. His future career should, therefore, be followed with interest by coursing men, and he should run well if in form in the Cup next year.

ON NORWEGIAN RIVERS.

IT is to be feared that some of the very best-meant attempts in the way of so-called salmon passes fail altogether to attain their object, if we are to suppose it to be that of affording facilities for the fish to ascend by them. Salmon passes, it possibly is necessary to explain, are inclined gradients specially constructed where the natural gradient of a river's fall is too steep and too high to allow the fish to go up. Such steep gradients may be natural, in the form of waterfalls, or they may be artificial, as where a dam has been made across the river. Few things in Nature are more remarkable than the salmon's power of ascending a swift stream and surmounting falls of a considerable height. Taking into consideration the fact that the water at the foot of a fall is always travelling rapidly down stream—that is to say, against the direction of the salmon's leap—its power of jumping from such a shifting "take off" as this is altogether surprising. Nevertheless there are

many obstacles that even this remarkable power of the fish is not able to overcome, and where this is the case, an easier way often is made for them by what are called salmon passes, or ladders. It is said that Scottish salmon have been known to jump successfully an obstacle of eight feet high, and that Norwegian and American fish are to be credited with bigger records than these. But it always has to be remembered that fish come up rivers for a definite purpose, namely, to spawn, and it is not to be expected that a fish heavy with spawn could be in quite the best condition for such high-jumping competitions. The term "ladder" describes very well the principle on which the best passes are made. It consists chiefly of a series of steps, with here and there a resting-place or break, which serves at once to relieve the rapid flow of water and to give the fish a chance of getting its breath. A fish pass seldom errs on the side of not giving the fish sufficient water, because it is only in or after times of spate that fish will try to run up, but they err sometimes in having their entrance too far below the obstacle, so that fish swim past without finding them, and far more often in having their entrance at a part of the stream to which fish are not naturally led by

the current. One of the most interesting and effective fish passes in the world forms the subject of our illustration. It is about half a mile in length, and the fall up which it gives comparatively easy ascent is scarcely less than ninety feet in height. All who have fished the Sire River in Norway will recognise it as the pass which leads up the falls of Rukanfos on that river. One of the houses or huts beside the ladder or pass is a river-watcher's house, the other the house where some salmon breeding, or hatching, processes are conducted. The ladder is formed on the ordinary pattern, similar in plan, though of greater length, to several on Scottish rivers.

This picture appears as an illustration in a book that hardly can fail to be of great use to the Briton who is going a-fishing in Norway. It issues from the house of Messrs. Lumley, Newton, and Dowell, of Lumley House, St. James's Street, and is edited by Mr. James Dowell, of that firm. Now, of course, it is quite evident that this book, entitled "Norwegian Anglings and other Sportings," is issued in the first place as a matter of business. It contains a brief account of some of the places that Messrs. Lumley have to let in Norway. But the fact that its issue probably is a good advertisement for the firm's business no more diminishes its usefulness, its interest, and even, it is not too much to say, its beauty (for it is most attractively got up and illustrated), than the fact that Messrs. Lumley have taken over a great many of the fishing rights in Norway, and have constituted themselves the responsible lessors, diminishes the prospect of the lessee getting some decent return for his money. When the lessee took his fishing from some of the Norwegian farmers, or even from some of the Norwegian agents, he often was quite ignorant, unless hard experience had taught him, of the prospects of fish in the water he rented, and it was not much consolation to him, when he came back empty-handed to England, to swear at a man some hundred miles off across the sea in a language that he did not understand. If a man wants



Photo.

STAR OF ANTRIM AND MILLIONS.

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Winner and Runner-up for the Purse.

to swear now, he can do his swearing in St. James's Street, to an audience that understands "English as she is spoke." This is much more pleasant for all parties. He ought not, however, to have so much occasion for swearing. Messrs. Lumley have been very fortunate in having the services in Norway of Mr. James Dowell, who knows every river there, and is a thoroughly good sportsman and fisherman. Acting on his instructions, the firm has pursued a steady policy during all the time that it has interested itself in Norwegian fishings. This policy consists in getting as much as possible of the fishing rights of every kind into their own hands on each river that they have turned their attention to. They have put down, and are putting down, annually, a good sum of money in purchase of farmers' netting rights. They secure these rights in order not to exercise them, that is to say, to leave the fish that formerly were netted, and in many cases trapped, for the sport of the angler and the increase of the salmon population of the river. The result of this policy may be traced in the records of bags made of recent years, and given in the book which we are noticing; and even so far as they go they form a keen comment on the statements that we have heard made, to the effect that netting does a salmon river no harm. There even is a certain river in the West of Ireland where taking off the nets at the mouth synchronised with an extreme failure of the salmon in that river, and on this text some would try to preach the amazing doctrine that netting improves the salmon stock. Probably a failure, from reasons quite beyond our knowledge, of the salmon of that river happened to coincide with the date of removing the nets, and in any case it is not reasonable to expect taking the nets off to affect the fish population to its full extent immediately. And saying this touches the question of the records given in Messrs. Lumley's interesting book very immediately, for certainly it is not till five years after the removal of nets that we can expect to see the full improvement likely to follow this measure. When nets are lifted it is not only that the fish which these nets might have caught go on to rejoice the heart of the angler. There is that in it; but there is more, namely, that these salmon (or the majority of them) achieve the purpose for which salmon go up into fresh water—they reach the spawning-beds and increase the population in numbers that could not have reached them while the nets remained. There is a class of men to whom all this action on the part of Messrs. Lumley—all that this book of theirs stands for—is altogether abominable. This is the class of the early angling pioneers in Norway, who have been used to getting their sport—and fine sport, too—by renting from the farmers, at a cheap rate, a few fine pools on certain rivers. They hate this incursion of the spirit of enterprise; and it is very natural that they should. But they have had a good turn, and they could not expect the blessed state of things to last which they had inaugurated. As a rule, they used to fish the pools and to let the netting go on unchecked in between and down below. Sometimes there has been enough for all; but there have been signs in plenty that the fish stock was beginning to feel the heavy strain on it. We have no concern whatever to appreciate the one side of the argument rather than the other, but it does seem as if it were for the advantage of the angling community that an intelligent policy should be followed out rather than that a few should enjoy exceptionally cheap sport.

So far as the angler who wants to take fishing in Norway is concerned, what Messrs. Lumley do is this, they let out a section of the river for one or two rods, they make all necessary provision, such as the catering, the accommodation, and so on—that is to say, they see that all these things come easily to the man who takes a beat. They do not leave him in the lurch, at an uninhabitable farmhouse, or to make a picnic analogous to the making of bricks without straw. They see that the whole thing is done with reasonable comfort. Mr. Dowell has personally inspected (we believe this to be an exact statement) every beat and every

place of accommodation. Boatmen are arranged for, and Mr. Dowell also can tell the angler who is going out what flies and apparatus he will want. All this, it may be repeated, is done as a matter of course, in the way of business. It is not supposed that the object is philanthropic, but perhaps it tends as much in the way of the general good as some philanthropic measures. It is by its results, of course, that the policy will be tested. The results, so far as they have gone, are very encouraging, and it will be most interesting to watch their further development.

Impertinent suggestions always should be resented in a proper spirit, but we will venture on the following to Messrs. Lumley, that a plain map, with little detail, of Norway, showing at a glance the lie of the chief rivers, etc., would add to the ready usefulness of their book.

FARMING IN PERSIA.

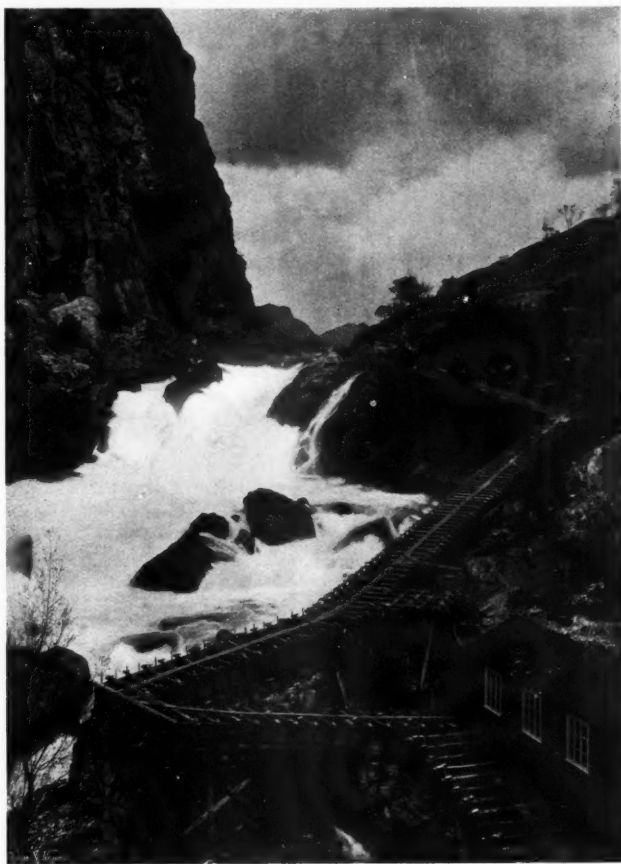
IT is well known that Belgium has contributed more than one high official to the European entourage of the enlightened Shah of Persia, and one of these, M. Castaigne, residing in Meshed and controlling the Customs of Khorassan and Sistan, contributes to a continental agricultural journal a most interesting summary of modern farming as practised in the dominions of his Asiatic employer.

All agricultural operations in that region are, as elsewhere, largely dependent on the supply of water, and water is about the dearest commodity in Persia. A sporadic cultivation is, it is true, observed along the banks of the few large rivers and their equally few tributaries, and this it is, perhaps, which has led to travellers bringing away with them exaggerated notions of the high state of cultivation throughout the land, simply because their wanderings did not take them far from the main waterways, and therefore into the less favoured districts of the realm. Otherwise than from the rivers and the supplementary irrigation that the farmers have there devised, the great plain of Khorassan depends for its moisture on the variable fall of snow between December and April, a wholly inadequate supply in an atmosphere of such rapid evaporation. So insufficient is the moisture, and in consequence so limited is the productive soil in each district, that the inhabitants, for fear of wasting ground that can be turned to better use, build their huts on the slopes of the

mountains, devoting the soil at their base to the raising of crops. In these earth huts men and animals dwell together, and calves and lambs may frequently be seen gambolling on the roofs.

Wheat, barley, poppy, lucerne, cuminsseed, and cotton are the chief crops, and there is also immense fruit culture, the native fruits being produced in such quantities as never to command a higher price in the local markets than (approximately) 4½d. per 6lb., otherwise one *kran* per *batman*. The communication from M. Castaigne gives many details of the ploughs and harrows in use, and he mentions the curious fact that manuring is unknown in any form in Persian agriculture. There are crude water mills for grinding the corn for bread, but many of the natives prefer the pestle and mortar. The native bread is harsh at first to the European palate, but those who have long resided in the country grow to appreciate it. A failure of snow or rain may inflict terrible suffering on the starving masses, and it is for this reason that the Government has severely prohibited the sale of corn to Russian buyers in Transcaspia.

The routes are, however, so numerous that it is impossible effectually to check this traffic, and the result is that Transcaspia continues to grow no corn of its own, while Persia continues to go short of bread. In another portion of this

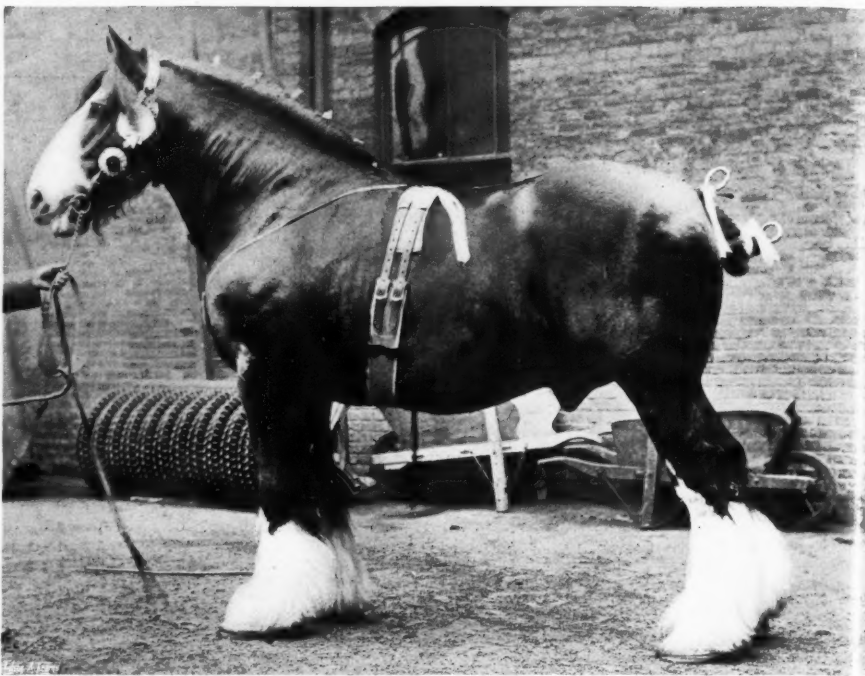


A NORWEGIAN FISH PASS.

letter there is an account of the cultivation and treatment of the white poppy and of the manufacture of opium from the flower. The incisions in the capsule have to be made between sunset and nightfall, since the sun's heat is fatal to success, and each morning before dawn the labourers repair to the poppy-fields to gather the precious creamy white, turgid liquid, which is later to be sold as opium. This curious harvest lasts about a fortnight only in each year. Much of the opium, adulterated for the most part with paste or sugar, is exported to China, but quantities are also consumed by the Persians themselves, with the usual disastrous physical and mental results. That the production of opium in Persia is considerable may be gathered from the returns, according to which Khorassan alone produced during 1901 opium to the value of about £24,000. The cotton industry, which is almost entirely in the hands of Armenians, subjects of Russia, is also large, exports being recorded to the value of fully £100,000. The Belgian official laments the waste of delicate grapes, the usage of which in the manufacture of red and white wines is prohibited by the laws and creed of the State, and the bulk of which is exported in the dried state to Russia. There are many other items in this letter, of which lack of space must here compel the omission, but the entire communication, as published in the Brussels journal, gives a very striking picture of present-day agricultural methods in the dominions of a progressive Asiatic potentate with whom this country cannot but come in yearly closer relations. F. G. A.

VALUE OF SHIRE HORSES.

LAST week's Shire horse sale has left behind it much for the lovers of the breed to think about. Thanks chiefly to the kindly and tactful co-operation of the King and Queen it was socially a success of the first order, crowded with visitors nearly the whole of the time, and never failing to interest them. As a show the result was not less brilliant. The classes were crowded with entries, and no competent judge has refused to admit that the quality of the animals was a great advance on that of previous years. Particularly was this the case in regard to the younger exhibits. The bone, substance, and action seen in them afforded proof that in this case fashion and fancy are not interfering with utility. Judges have not yet fallen into the habit of attaching too much importance to arbitrary points, but deliver their verdicts as though continually in their mind's eye was the ideal of what a heavy cart-horse should be. It is to be hoped that this state of things will long continue. The number of entries, and especially of young horses, shows that an increasing number of people annually take up the fashionable pastime of rearing Shires. In consequence the competition is very much greater, though the victory of the veteran Stroxtom



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MESSRS. FORSHAW'S STROXTON TOM.

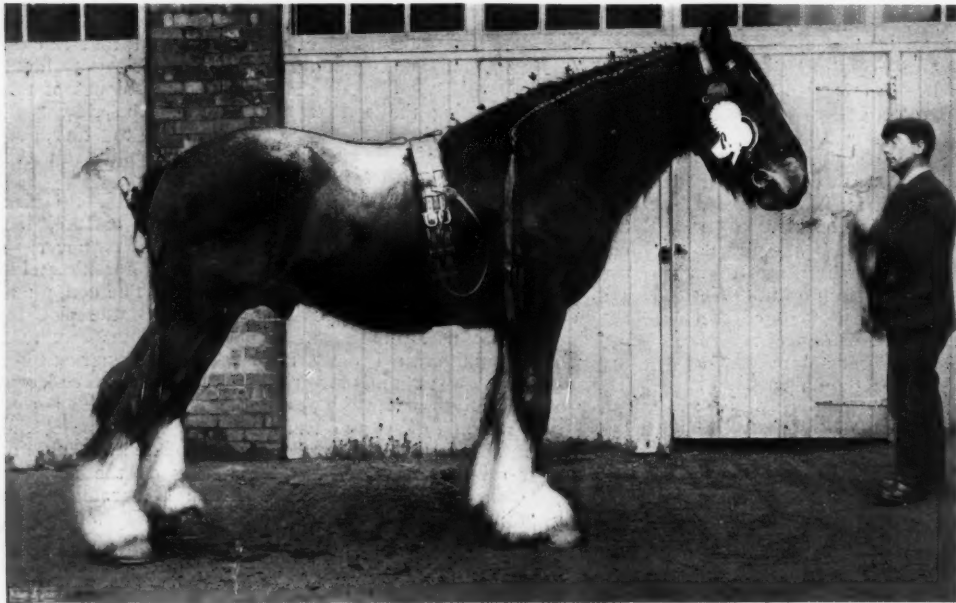
"COUNTRY LIFE."

Tom for the championship shows that the new generation cannot have all its own way with the old.

On the other hand, Lord Rothschild's young stallion, Birdsall Menestrel, has not yet come to his best, and it was a hard struggle between the two stallions. If he goes on as he has begun, we expect that in another twelve months or two years he will be much more difficult to put down. We offer illustrations of both, in order that our readers may compare the old horse with the new.

From one point of view the sale-ring is as interesting as the show-ring, and it is well worth the trouble to compare the average price of the present year with those of past years. The outstanding feature of this year's sale was, as in the show, the number of entries. They amounted to no fewer than 237, as against 217 in 1901, and 164 in 1900. The increase is exactly what we might reasonably expect from the enlarged number of Shire studs. So also is the slight falling off in the average price. The average this year was £77 18s., compared with £87 in 1901, and £79 18s. 4d. in 1900. Obviously for a dray-horse meant not for show but for hard work this is as high a price as the ordinary buyer would care to give, and it is also one that the breeder would find remunerative. For such animals as were regarded as good to breed from much higher prices were readily given, as will be seen from the following instances: Lord Iveagh gave 165 guineas for a yearling mare from the stud of Mr. Cross; Mr. Brereton gave 300 guineas for Mr. Ashley's Surney Whitefoot, a three year old mare; for one of the same class, Creslow Belle IV., from Mr. Rowland's stud, Mr. J. Pearman gave 175 guineas; and Mr. P. A. Muntz, M.P., gave 300 guineas for a three year old stallion.

Curiously enough, there was little or no demand for geldings, only six being sold, at an average price of £65 6s. 2d. each. Yet, on the whole, it cannot be fairly said that satisfactory prices were not obtained, although they were not sensational. One thing must be considered along with another, and the sales from the pedigree studs of the present year all falling slightly below the highest average obtained formerly, seems to indicate that the value of the Shire is no longer a fancy one, but dependent mostly on utility. Also so many first-class stallions have come into existence of recent years, and the best blood has gone so very widely diffused, that for the moment it would appear that the extraordinary prices paid during the last few seasons for animals of rare and exceptional merit are not likely to be repeated very speedily. But the Shire business is perhaps on all the better foundation on account of that.



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LORD ROTHSCHILD'S BIRDSALL MENESTREL.

"COUNTRY LIFE."

"CHUCK & CHANCE IT" TROUT STREAMS

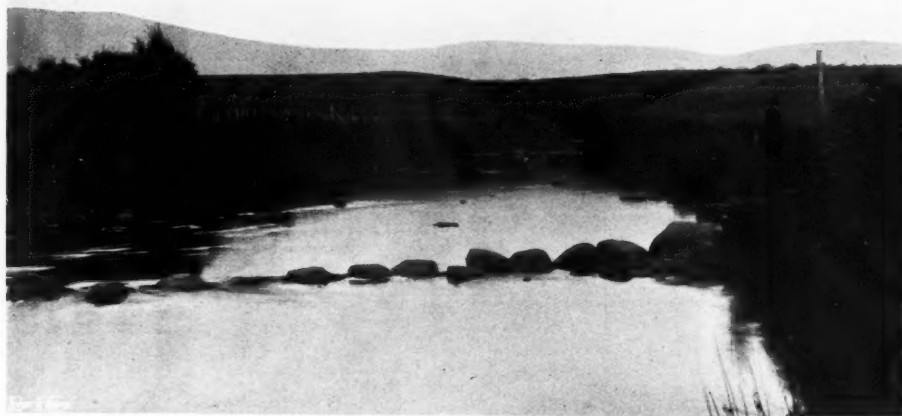
IN the month of February the angler on certain early trout streams already is looking out his tackle, his "February reds," "iron blue duns," and the rest of the early flies. Man, in this world of cars, is taken largely at his own valuation. There hardly is a more striking instance of this than the pious and pathetic way in which the angler with the sunk fly accepts all the claims that are made for himself by the dry-fly

fisher. It almost is too much to say of the latter that he makes claims. He hardly deigns to do even this. He is a dry-fly fisher; he announces himself as such, and he exists. That is all; there is no more to say. As for the sunk-fly fishing, if you ask him what he thinks of it, he replies virtually in the classical words of Thackeray, when an American asked him what they thought in England of Tupper, "They do not think of him," he said. Neither does the dry-fly fisher think of the fisher with the sunk fly. He does not regard him as a fisherman, nor the sunk-fly business as fishing at all.

Nevertheless there are subtleties, now and then, about the wet-fly business. It is not to be said that there is great subtlety, when the burns are swollen with rain and clearing after an abundant spate, in fetching out the little brown trout that rush

at every fly, no matter the manner in which it is presented to them. This is not high art. This deserves every criticism and all the scorn of contemptuous silence that the dry-fly angler may care to cast at it. This is the "chuck and chance it" method at its crudest. But even in this most primitive form of the fly-fisher's art there is a considerable difference in the respective bags that a tolerable master and a bungler will bring home at

the end of the day. So there must be room for some skill, at least, in the way the fly is shown to the fish, even here. And if there is no great subtlety in the angling, there is at least a wild charm in the surroundings—the purling brook (I suppose we may take the "purling" to mean the babble of the water over the stones), the rushing burn, the heather, the hills, the birches, the bracken. One might continue cataloguing the delights *ad infinitum*; and these peculiar delights are associated with fishing in those rapid streams that are suitable for the wet fly all the kingdom over—on Scotland's burns, Yorkshire's beckes, Devonshire's brooks, and the mountain streams of Wales. There is a delight, too, of the chalk streams going through the pastoral countries of Hampshire, Hertfordshire, Kent, or where you will; but it is a different kind of delight, a more peaceful delight.



C. Reid, Wishaw, N.B.

WHERE THE DRY-FLY MAY WORK.

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C. Reid, Wishaw, N.B.

JUST AFTER SUNSET.

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Fishing on these lowland meadows is more truly the sport of the contemplative man than is fishing on the noisy hill streams. It would be very wrong to say that the latter fishing is the more exciting, for there is no sport, perhaps, so exciting in the world—that, at least, is the view of many who have tried many sports—as that of marking down your rising fish, noting that he is a good one, and worthy of all the skill you can put into the business of his capture, then stalking him with every precaution, and finally, at the first attempt—for the second will be just one too late—casting your tiny fly to float directly over him. There is nothing quite like this in all the wet-fly fishing. But, nevertheless, to come back to the point that I started out to make in the wet-fly fisher's defence, there is scope for not a little skill in getting the better of some of the fish of the fast streams also. The fast streams are not always at their fastest; it is not always that the crude "chuck and chance it" avails; and it is just when rivers have run down fairly clear, and you are able to mark your rising fish and to estimate their probable weight, that the scope for the finest skill is found in conditions which approach those of the dry-fly rivers. A great many people—for there are many such, even of those who are fond of fishing—that do not know much of the dry-fly sport will ask, and not unnaturally, what the difference is between a wet-fly and a dry-fly stream. If a fish in one stream will take a dry, or floating, fly in preference to a wet, or sunk, one, why will fish not do the same on another river? There seems little doubt that the difference is this—a fish that is used to seeing floating flies will take a floating fly in preference to a sunk fly. The former generally is alive, the latter dead, and we may suppose there is more flavour in the live fly. There are a great many streams, where the current runs fast and the surface is much broken, on which it is impossible for a fly, either natural or artificial, to float for long. A fly may, it is true, drop down on the water momentarily, as many do, to deposit an egg, and up again; but any fly floating down on the surface would not go many yards without being overwhelmed and carried down, water-logged, below the surface. We see this over and over again in rises of March browns, duns,



C. Reid, Wishaw, N.B.

A SILENT POOL.

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and what you will, in the fast streams. The angler here has no option. With the best will, and also with the best skill, in the world, he will not be able to keep his artificial fly on the top of the water; nor if he did would the fish take it, for it is not the way that they see the natural fly coming to them. But where the stream goes placidly, like the smooth-flowing Test or Itchen, there the flies float in their multitudes on the comparatively smooth surface, and the dry fly of the angler, imitating them as best it can, deceives now and then even these sophisticated fish. There is many a river in Great Britain where, much to the astonishment sometimes of the local angler, who has not been initiated into the highest mysteries of the craft, a deal is to be done with the floating fly. On the chalk streams, the dry fly only (except under unusual circumstances) avails much, but there are many of the more placidly flowing streams where the floating fly has not been greatly used, but where it is very deadly. Of course one must have a little stream to move the fly, and therefore it seldom is much good to try the dry fly on a lake. It will not deceive even the simplest fish when it is quite at rest, and if you begin to drag a floating fly at all, which is the only way to give it movement on a still surface, it becomes at once a fearsome object to the fish. The sunk fly you may drag, and so impart to it some semblance of life; and on the lakes that plan seems the best.

There is one scheme familiar to the dry-fly angler that often may be tried with effect on the fish of the fast and of the sunk-fly streams. I will point out first that what fish especially fear is either the wholly unaccustomed—such as the sight of a man on the bank of a river where men are scarce—or the sight of something they have learned by experience to dread. The first statement may be proved by noting how indifferent fish grow to the sight of figures on the bank wherever the river runs past a frequented path, or where a bridge goes over it; they take no more notice of man than a flock of sheep take of a train, if they are used to it. On the other hand, such fish as these generally are most hard to catch, for the vicinity of man to fish argues a probability that the former has passed many an artificial fly over the latter. For confirmation of the second point, I will instance a certain Irish river where the natives, horrible to relate, shoot the fish—and good trout too! Here the fish, finding that a man on the bank commonly means a flash, an explosion, commotion in the water and death, are fearfully shy and difficult of approach, but if you once can get within casting range of them and can put a fly over them without their seeing any waving of the rod, they will almost always take it.

The fish of the Highland burns, and so on, very seldom see men or figures of any kind on the bank, and they are far more easily scared than most anglers seem to recognise. They always are the best fish that are the most wise and wary, and in consequence, unless the river is fairly thick, it is very important to keep out of the fishes' sight. Now there is a certain place in a fast stream especially affected by the bigger fish (all things are relative, and these fish seldom are really of any size, but they all fight gallantly). This place is in the shelter of a big stone, or rock. Here a good fish often may be seen rising steadily in the comparatively smooth water where the current has been checked and divided by the stone. You may try for this fish casting up,



C. Reid. A BURN IN THE ISLE OF ARRAN. Copyright

and the fly looks as if it came to him charmingly if you just put it on the stone and let it fall off. It is a well-known trick to throw on to the opposite bank and let the fly drop off to a fish feeding on insects dropping from the bank. But these fish, behind stones, seem to know that fish insects do not often drop off stones, but more often are carried round by the current. At all events the fly, thus softly offered, very seldom seems to attract these trout. If you go opposite, and throw across stream, the fish sees you, and then you need not trouble to cast for him any more. "Remember," says an old fishing maxim, "that the coarsest fishing when the fish do not see you will succeed better than the finest when they do." There is but one method, so far as I know, at all constantly deadly with a fish rising in such a place as this, and that is to go well up stream (so far that he does not see you), and let the fly come floating down, round the stone, towards him. It is quite easy. It only is necessary to get to the right point, straight above stream, so that the fly goes right, but if there is any trouble you always can pull back the fly before it comes to the trout, for he will not see you pulling it, because of the stone and the broken water. The fish is likely to lie not in the V-shaped stillest bit of water right behind the stone, but just in the edge of the broken water.

Then, of course, once you have hooked him the fun begins,



C. Reid. *BELOW THE WATERFALL.* Copyright

for you are exactly in the wrong place for landing him easily, and not even the most extreme advocate of the dry fly will deny to the fish of the fast streams a fine fighting courage and vigour. But if the dry-fly fisher wished to be a perfectly just man, as Aristotle says, he would give a little more credit than he often does to the subtleties of the amateur of the sunk fly.

A NEGLECTED . . . SPORTING BIRD.

THE wood-pigeon is with us all the year round, and yet how few sportsmen make any systematic endeavour to obtain a share of that exhilarating form of shooting which, it is well known, this fine sporting bird can on occasion afford.

During the short, dark days of mid-winter sportsmen are frequently at a loss to know best how to spend their time. All sportsmen—some more, some less—are slaves of the weather, and what more dejected body of men can one find anywhere than, say, a party of fox-hunters penned up for days in some country house waiting for frost to break or snow to vanish? As likely as not the coverts will have been shot through twice—probably thrice; of snipe, too, there may be none; and after a couple of days'

shooting at rabbits bolted by the ferrets, such proceeding will be voted insufferably slow by the gunner of average energy. Still, those fond of the gun need not—in most well-timbered countries, at least—go sportless, as there may then be more or less sport to be obtained with the wood-pigeons. In many situations there is, apart from sport, a strong incentive to wage war upon the voracious ringdove.

It is but a few days ago since the daily papers contained an account of the damage that was being inflicted—in Devonshire, if I recollect aright—by countless hordes of wood-pigeons, whole fields of trefoil and clover having been completely devastated by these creatures. Ringdoves have enormous appetites; the amount of succulent green food in the form of clover leaves or turnip tops, or of more solid matter, such as wheat, barley, or other grain, that can be stowed away in their elastic crops must be seen to be thoroughly realised. At this season the wood-pigeon is on his very worst behaviour, for if the weather is mild he fairly revels in the springing pastures of young clover and other seeds, picking out the central buds and tender shoots, doing in the course of a few days incalculable harm by greatly retarding the growth of the plant, and thus destroying in great measure the farmer's hope of early pasturage for his sheep. A most careful and painstaking observer of birds and their habits, the late Lord Lilford, has placed it upon record as his deliberate opinion that the wood-pigeon is all but purely detrimental to the farmer, his good deeds being in no way comparable to the damage he inflicts. This being so, there is every incentive to the gunner to secure every available bit of sport with the wood-pigeons, for with each bird added to the bag comes the comforting assurance that an enemy to good husbandry has been despatched.

It is, of course, pretty generally known that the ranks of our home-bred wood-pigeons are greatly augmented by continental birds during late autumn. The rigours of winter in Northern Europe prove too trying for even the hardy wood-pigeon; consequently, neither ringdove nor stockdove will remain there, the probability being that many Scandinavian birds find their way to this country. In most seasons about the end of November or the beginning of December tens of thousands of wild pigeons arrive in this country, and about that time it is not an uncommon spectacle to see many acres of land at a stretch literally blued over with these birds. Then on visiting their roosting-places one finds both trees and ground whitened over to such an extent with their droppings that reader credence can be given to the tales of the early North American settlers respecting the enormous gatherings of the passenger pigeon encountered when that bird was migrating.

To the clear and complete directions for the shooting of wood-pigeons in winter, as given to young shooters by Sir Ralph Payne-Gallwey, there is not much to add. It may, however, be well to point out that one thing militating against the making of large bags in the pursuit of pigeons is the system of ceaseless worrying of the birds that is adopted by some people. Of course, where pigeons are doing great damage, the necessity may arise for their constant harassment; but wherever the shooting of wood-pigeons is conducted on truly sporting principles, the exigencies of most situations demand the giving the birds stated periods of rest in which to regain confidence, otherwise they may be driven away, more or less, from the locality. As in all probability the gunner's winter stock of wood-pigeons will be composed chiefly of foreigners, it must be remembered that these fowl have not that incentive to remain in his woods and fields as have birds reared in the district.

Given a windy day in December or January, and the pigeon shooter is certain to have good sport in districts abounding with wood-pigeons. In fact, the stormier the weather the better for the bag, provided the shooter is able to make the most of his opportunities, for then the report of the gun becomes of trifling import, and the pigeons fighting their way against a heavy gale are so much occupied as to forget much of their habitual caution in moving from place to place. Wood-pigeons, too, are much more restless in windy than in calm weather, and are then usually on the move from daydawn till dusk. Then is the opportunity to make a respectable bag of pigeons, and at such times gunners who are well acquainted with the difficulties of the sport take a peculiar pleasure in bringing down these truly wild and strong-flying fowl. On these occasions the shooter who, whilst standing in, say, a wood of tall firs, or perhaps of oaks, can account for fifty or more wood-pigeons, must be put down as no mean performer with the gun. His bag will, in all probability, be a mixed one, inasmuch as it may be composed of ringdoves and stockdoves; and he who has had much experience in the ways and manner of flight of these wood-fowl is fully alive to the fact that the latter are much less stable objects at which to take aim than are their larger and less nimble brethren, the ringdoves. That sportsman must surely be difficult to please who returns not home thoroughly satisfied after making a bag of fifty wood-pigeons amidst such surroundings, for it is scarcely likely that it will be denied that the getting together of a bag of this character calls for as great a display of skill as the killing twice that number of grouse, pheasants, or partridges under the usual conditions of their pursuit. The largest bags of wood-pigeons of which there is sufficiently authentic record are those made by Lord Walsingham, who on four occasions has succeeded in bringing down to his own gun upwards of 100 wood-pigeons in one day. The following series are so remarkable that perhaps I may be excused if I again place them on record:

Year.	Date.	No. of Pigeons.	Where killed.	Remarks.
1869	Nov. 13	69	Narford	Among beeches.
1869	Dec. 29	83	Holkham	Among evergreen oaks, in snow.
1883	Feb. 14	80	Merton	Coming to feed on a clover layer.
1867	Dec. 7	97	"	Over oaks, snow and wind.
1869	Dec. 1	102	"	Over beeches, in a snowstorm.
1886	Dec. 3	121	"	Over oaks.
1870	Aug. 12	124	"	Among sheaves of barley at harvest-time.
1884	Jan. 28	125	"	Over oaks, high wind.

It is not improbable that so lengthy and so high a record is altogether unique in the annals of wood-pigeon shooting. Lord Walsingham, too, is accredited with the biggest bag of grouse that has ever fallen to one gun in one day, and the probability is that more keen pleasure was experienced by him in killing 100 wood-pigeons than in shooting ten times that number of grouse. Of a certainty, in addition to the requisite degree of skill in handling the shot-gun, an unexampled knowledge of the habits of the birds, their mode of flight, and of woodcraft generally is needed before the shooter is able to lay out a row of wood-pigeons 120 strong at the end of his day's shooting.

To the shooting of wood-pigeons in winter, and during the open season generally, game preservers and owners of coverts will raise few objections, but in the spring and throughout the nesting season they will most likely be

strenuously averse to such practice. In March and April, and again after they have reared their first broods, wood-pigeons are often enough found working great destruction with the farmer's crops. Naturally, at such a critical season of the year the farmer endeavours to slay or terrorise the marauders; then, what with the popping of blank powder charges, the springing of rattles, or clapping of clappers, and the yelling and ceaseless perambulations of juvenile bird-scarers, the country-side is roused most effectually, with the result that game is scared equally as though an occasional field-day with one or two guns had been organised for the destruction of the wood-pigeons. But this is not all. To make matters worse, the shooting undertaken against the wood-pigeons in spring and summer is invariably effected with 12-bore guns and full charges of both powder and shot. By such method the quietude of the game covert is too often ruthlessly disturbed. This, however, need not be.

In the 12-bore with ordinary cartridges we have too much gun and too much powder for this summer shooting, and the desired result can quite well be brought about if some considerable economy in both noise and powder is effected. One of the most pleasing and truly effective miniature firearms to use for such shooting as is permissible during spring and summer is, I find, one of those diminutive arms familiarly known as a walking-stick gun. These, probably, with their load consisting of but a pinch each of powder and of shot, are looked upon by those ignorant of their true properties as being little more than mere toys. Not so those who have shot with them, they being fully alive to the fact that any amount of quiet sport may be had with these small arms when the need exists for thinning out the wood-pigeons or rabbits between seasons.

These walking-stick guns, as their name implies, are constructed in the form of a walking-stick, the best pattern being hammerless, and having a safety-bolt attached—a highly necessary adjunct, by the way, in the case of a gun having no trigger-guard. They are made in various sizes from 20-bore—or is it 28-bore? I really forget at the moment, speaking from memory—downwards. There is,

however, no need to have a gun of the calibre first named, for in practice I find a .450 bore all-sufficient for the work in hand. Loaded with some suitable nitro powder this gun makes very little noise, and with No. 7 or No. 8 shot will stop pigeon or rabbit at 25 yds. It is, perhaps, needless to add that as the killing circle presented by so small a shot charge is necessarily small, the aim must be correspondingly deadly.

In spring and throughout summer wood-pigeons are usually much more susceptible to the allurements of the decoy than they are during winter. In winter the decoys are chiefly serviceable in enticing pigeons to come within gun range, thereby enabling the shooter to obtain shots at moving birds—a highly sporting method of shooting this, of course. But in spring the wood-pigeons will be found to alight far more readily and unsuspectingly to artistically displayed decoys, whether these be live or stuffed birds or dummies made of wood.

In March—often when bitter east winds wither up the springing blades of tender young grass as though they were frost-bitten, and dry up the tilled soils if it were sun-baked—the farmer is busy putting in his seeds, and hungry wood-pigeons will then effect considerable damage. Although hedge, tree, and covert are then as bare as in midwinter, this need not interfere with the work of extermination, for the exterminator of these farmers' pests has but to construct a shelter of branches at the foot of some hedgerow tree, or, otherwise, in some suitable spot along the fence if trees are not, to obtain sport to his heart's content wherever wood-pigeons are plentiful. Here the little .450-bore comes in handy, and with six or eight good decoys fixed up some 16 yds. or 18 yds. away, the concealed sportsman will find himself able to kill every pigeon settling amidst his lures. Then on returning with thirty, forty, or maybe fifty pigeons at the end of his day's sport, not the least part of his satisfaction will arise from the knowledge that such bag has been secured for the well-nigh irreducible minimum of powder and shot, as also of noise and fuss likely to disturb game.

CHARLES E. RAVEN.

GEORGE HERBERT'S HOUSE & GARDEN.

NOT long ago it was shown in these columns that ruin and decay have fallen upon the house and grounds associated with the name of the most illustrious Victorian poet; his name is scarcely remembered in his father's parish, and would speedily be forgotten but for the stream of pilgrims, chiefly Americans, to it. George Herbert is not esteemed so great a poet, but his name has been kept in more loving memory. The writing of his biography was entrusted to the tender hands of Izaak Walton, who delighted in language almost as much as, and in Nature more than, Herbert, and who enriched the "life" accordingly with phrases that have become immortal, and foretold that his actions should "smell sweet in death and blossom in the dust." He also refers to "the good and more pleasant than healthful Parsonage of Bemerton," but the subsequent record shows a succession of long-lived and scholarly tenants, the latest and not least worthy of whom is Canon Warre, the present incumbent, whose long lives effectually dispose of the allegation of insanitariness. Herbert was born in 1593, so that the tercentenary of his birth was commemorated in 1893.

His popularity has had many fluctuations. It was supreme in his own day, but faded somewhat in the eighteenth century, when Addison failed to see more in his writing than examples of false wit, and it failed to appeal to the temperament of Johnson. Then the sage of Highgate later still declared that the reader must "be an affectionate and dutiful child of the Church," and yet after his day, when zeal for the Church had greatly cooled, it is remarkable what a strange revival came about of the taste for Herbert. Many who never enter a church porch find a solace in the reading of this most devotional of poets, who therefore must be held in his inspired moments to have dived below all accidental and ephemeral changes of thought and touched on what is eternal in human nature.

Be that so or not, his personality will always lend an interest to his house and garden. George Herbert was something more



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THE PARSONAGE AT BEMERTON.

"COUNTRY LIFE."

than a saint. He came of an aristocratic and illustrious family, and had he chosen any mundane career, there was nothing lacking to his success in his wit, polish, and courtliness. He has told us, in one of those poems that are records of his spiritual struggle, of the temptations that came to him, first in the shape of beauty, then money "chinking still," next "brave glory puffing by," and finally "quick Wit and Conversation." And with all these he conveys in his poems an understanding and sympathy that bridges whatever gulf might otherwise exist between the saint and the worldling. It is the lot of few to have inspired a warmer affection, and succeeding incumbents of Bemerton seem to have caught an emanation of it and preserved whatever helped to keep his memory green. The little church at Bemerton, which was probably erected in the fourteenth century, has undergone many changes and restorations since then, but essentially is now very much what it was in the time of Herbert. It retains the "alphabet" bells and some other characteristics alluded to by him. The parsonage, too, has altered little. After Herbert's rebuilding he caused to be inscribed on the mould of



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A SECLUDED WALK.

"COUNTRY LIFE."

the chimney in his hall certain verses. The hall itself has been much changed and subdivided, though now restored to what it was in Herbert's time. A copy was engraved on stone by the late rector and inserted in the outer wall of the entrance, where the lines may be read to this day. They are as follows:

"TO MY SUCCESSOR.
 "If thou chance for to find
 A new house to thy mind,
 And built without thy cost,
 Be good to the poor,
 As God gave thee store,
 And then my labour's not lost."

A very competent authority, the late J. E. Nightingale, has said "the hall has been restored to pretty much what it was in all probability in George Herbert's time, and the massive chimney-piece still remains." So also does the little dim study, that is so like what the den of a student-priest and poet ought to be. Herbert had only been three months married when he came here, and must have been exceedingly happy. At the first meeting, between him and Jane Danvers "a mutual affection entered into both their hearts as a conqueror enters into a surprised city," and Miss Danvers "changed her name into Herbert the third day after this first interview." Walton gives the following delicious account of their married life: "There never was any opposition betwixt them unless it were a contest which should most incline to a compliance with the other's desires. And though this begot, and continued in them such a mutual love, joy, and content, as was no way defective; yet this mutual content and love and joy did receive a daily augmentation by such daily obligingness to each other, as still added new affluences to the former fulness of these divine souls, as was only improvable in heaven, where they now enjoy it." And in this happiness one can well understand the fertility

of his poetic invention as described by himself:

"Thousands of notions in my brain
 did runne,
 Off'ring their service if I were not
 sped;
 I often blotted what I had begun—
 This was not quick enough, and
 that was dead."

Eloquent testimony is borne to the fact that he lived the life he preached by the attitude of the poor, the most vigilant and merciless judges of a clergyman. We read that "they would let their plough rest when Mr. Herbert's saints' bell rung to prayers, that they might also offer their devotions to God with him, and would then return back to their plough." But always the finest nature is the most discontented and critical of itself, and he has told us that his poems are records of spiritual struggle. He tells us that he knew the ways of learning, the ways of honour, its quick returns and courtesies, the ways of pleasure, its sweet strains and lullings and relishes, and that he followed his chosen path not with sealed but open eyes; and so the day, so cool, so calm, so bright, did not pass without leaving behind it traces of

struggle and rebellion. As he was the most conspicuous saint, so his brother was the most advanced freethinker of his age, and it is easy to understand that not without occasional doubt and hesitation did he compose his mind to compliance with Christian doctrine. One likes to fancy him pacing the rectory garden at eventide, for it remains very much as he left it. The main feature is indeed unchangeable, since the Nadder flows past now exactly as it did then, shining and dimpling under the waving willows. No doubt flower plots have been changed, roses uprooted or trees planted; even the yew hedge, of which we give a picture, was probably planted after his time. Yet the main fact remains that for three centuries the rectory garden has been kept to its original design by men of taste and leisure. The present incumbent, Canon Warre, is as great an enthusiast for flowers as for George Herbert, and that is saying a great deal. If the author of "The Temple" were to revisit those "glimpses of the



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WALK BY THE RIVER.

"COUNTRY LIFE."

moon," he would find nothing to shock and little to surprise him in the garden that he loved. He would see the fair stream gliding past and the grass growing as they did in his own day and generation. Also he would behold many of the flowers familiar to him, and if here and there he beheld some bright-tinted new comer, he would not find it in any way altering the character of his beloved retreat. Very typical of the loving care bestowed on all that was his is the old medlar tree. We have previously shown it in winter, when the absence of leaves brings out more distinctly the props and bandages by which it is supported. They give it the appearance of a war-worn ancient soldier, and yet in spring it manages to throw out blossoms, and in summer and autumn to bring its fruit to perfection. Lord Pembroke has got slips of it at Wilton, and others are in existence, yet we may be sure that as long as it retains a spark of life the old medlar will be cared for. And indeed it brings us into touch with the far-off times of him who planted it. And they will be fancied all the more vividly by those who recall the almost Homeric sentences wherein, being at the gates of death, he recalled what life had been to him: "I now look back upon the pleasures of my life past and see the content I have taken in beauty, in wit, in music, and pleasant conversation are now all past by me like a dream, or as a shadow that returns not, and are now all become dead to me or I to them; and I see that as my father and generation hath done before me, so I also shall now suddenly with Job make my bed in the dark." Here is the note in Herbert, deeper than any found in transitory doctrine or ceremony, that commends him to many to whom the forms he affected are "a creed outworn." It was sounded long ago by Homer when he made the manes of Ajax say, "It is better, O Odysseus, to be thrall to a landless man than to reign over all the kingdom of the dead," and in our own day by Swinburne, when he made the dying Meleager look forward "to move among shadows a shadow and wail by impassable streams." When you come to think of it this is a strange addition to the mixed reflections that arise at Bemerton. Here the earliest inhabitants were those of "inexpressibly remote antiquity," older than the pit-dwellers at Highfield; here the ancient Britons had a fortress, and the Romans who drove them away made the roads, and after this we seem to come on modern times, when we recall that here in 1194 Richard Cœur de Lion held a gay and brilliant tournament. Yet more interesting to us than any of the dim figures in the wide field of time is the poet-priest meditating in his garden and coining his rich thoughts into what Cowper called the "rude and Gothic" poetry of his age.



THE HAMAMELIS.

NO family of trees or shrubs has greater interest at this season than the Hamamelis, or Witch Hazels, which were shown so delightfully a few days ago by Messrs. Veitch and Sons of Chelsea at a meeting of the Royal Horticultural Society. One was *H. japonica* arborea, and the other *H. j. zuccariniana*. *H. arborea* is the most beautiful of the whole family. It flowers in mid-winter, and every leafless shoot is bright with golden curled and twisted petals, and relieved by little crimson sepals; the whole flower is a study of bright colouring and quaint shape, and in the weak sunshine of a January day is a bit of colouring that astonishes anyone who knows not of the existence of such a sturdy little Japanese shrub or half-tree. It does not grow very tall, and for that reason may be planted in the shrubbery or made a bed of as at Kew, where a group was recently in bloom near the Orchid houses. *H. j. zuccariniana* is quieter in colour, a soft canary yellow, touched with green, but has to the writer almost as much charm as *H. arborea*. The shoots shown by Messrs. Veitch attracted much attention. *H. virginiana* has bright yellow flowers, but the two to plant first are *H. arborea* and *H. zuccariniana*.

GARRYA ELLIPTICA.

"T." writes: "Of all trees or shrubs remarkable for the beauty of their catkins this native of California is one of the best, and if it were perfectly hardy we should no doubt meet with it far more often than is the case at the present time, for a good specimen veiled with its long pendulous catkins forms one of the most striking features among outdoor shrubs in the depth of winter. It is apt to suffer during severe frosts, but where this does not happen it forms a free-growing bush, clothed with leaves which in general appearance suggest some forms of the evergreen Oak. In the case of this *Garrya* the male and female flowers are borne on different plants, the latter being much less common and not nearly so effective as the male, on which alone catkins are borne. These catkins, which in the case of exceptionally vigorous examples will reach a length of nearly a foot, are of a greyish green colour, the flowers themselves being small and nearly hidden. Where it is not sufficiently hardy to stand the winter this *Garrya* may be treated as a wall shrub. It was, I believe, introduced by the ill-fated Douglas, in whose honour *Abies Douglasi* is appropriately named."

MARSH PLANTS.

Mrs. Bailey, Rowden Abbey, Bromyard, writes: "In COUNTRY LIFE of February 8th there is an article on 'Flowers for a Marsh.' If you can give me 'E. W.'s' address I can let him have plenty of bulrushes and common

yellow Iris, as we have just been clearing them out of our pools." Will 'E. W.' please note that his address has not been kept.

VIOLETS A FAILURE.

"I unfortunately missed the article 'Violet Culture in Frames,' in which I am interested. Perhaps 'J. K. S.' would care to hear how I grow them, and I believe I am considered very successful hereaway. First of all you must start with good young plants, *not runners*, but offshoots from the main root, just as you would Auriculas. These at the end of March or beginning of April should be pulled off the old plant and planted out into a bright sunny bed in the garden. They want sun, and of course plenty of water during the hot season. Look over them every week and remove all runners and any weeds, and as for soil, nothing but leaf-mould and chalk in proportion of eight to two. By September your frames should be ready. These should be built of brick gin, thick, 18in. high in front, and 36in. at the back, 6ft. wide and any length you like. Mine was 24ft. by 6ft. Fill in the bottom of the frame so as to give 15in. beneath the glass and top of drainage. On this place gin, of good leaf-mould and chalk firmly. Your plants by the first week of September should now be really well grown, and some showing buds, even flowers. Plant them 9in. to 12in. apart, and 3in. from the glass. Keep the lights off until the weather changes and gets cool at night, and then close the frames one hour before sundown, and open about 9 a.m., or as the air gets warm in the morning. Never leave fully opened flowers on the plants if you want a succession, and pick any damaged leaves. My Violets are picked heavily twice or thrice a week. The frames should face full south, and give plenty of air as long as there is no frost. Cover from very heavy rain, but mild showers will not hurt. Snow and frost, of course, should never touch the plants, otherwise keep the lights off. Frost and snow are kept out by coverings, and wooden frames are useless."—A. NEWALL.

THE MAY-FLOWERING PHEASANT'S-EYE NARCISSUS.

"E. B." writes: "This is one of the best of the Narcissi for naturalising, for not only does it adapt itself to almost all soils (unless they are very poor), but increases in vigour, and flowers more profusely with age. Some years ago, after realising the value of *N. poeticus* for cutting, I planted a quantity down the centre of rows of Gooseberries and Currants and under bush Apple trees, not in any great variety, but to secure a long season from the first flowering of the pretty Tenby Daffodil Narcissus *obvallaris* until the last flower of the double *N. poeticus* had faded, a period of three months. This succession is provided by a careful assortment of the trumpet, star, and pheasant's-eye groups. Of the various bulbs originally planted some still provide plenty of flowers, and others have required renewal, but none are so good as the late single *N. poeticus*. An average of twenty-five flowers is obtained from each clump, the result of planting ten years ago. We had nearly 10,000 flowers last year from two rows, each about 40yds. long."

A NOTE ON SPANISH IRISES.

"C." writes: "These should be planted in every garden, however small. Many of them rival the Orchid and are invaluable for cutting. October is the best month for planting. If planted later the flowers are neither so large nor so fine in colour. I once planted some in December; hoping to secure a late supply of bloom, but the plants were weak and the flowers only half their normal size. I used to grow them in a light, well-drained soil, in which they did well the first year, but always died off the second. Three of the most beautiful varieties are Canary Bird, pale yellow; Jupiter, a darker shade of yellow; and Lady Blanche, white, with orange lip."

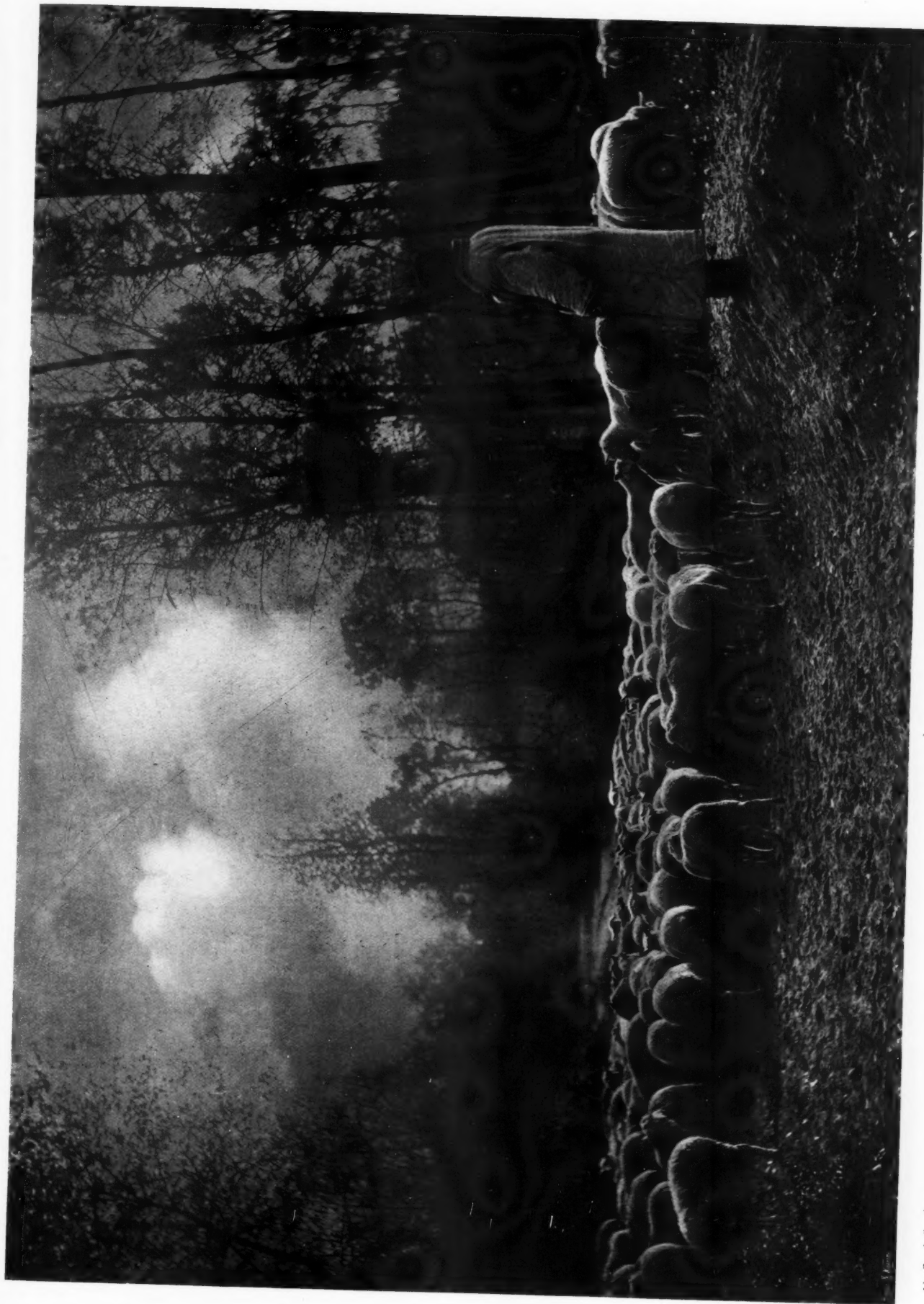
VEGETABLE MARROWS IN FRAMES.

Those interested in Vegetable Marrows and the way to produce them early will appreciate the following remarks by one of England's best vegetable gardeners: "Few vegetables are more generally appreciated when produced early than Vegetable Marrows, but for some reason they are not much grown, considering the small trouble necessary to have them in abundance during May and June. I have for some years made a practice of growing them in frames with the best possible results, and for the benefit of those who have not done so, and are anxious to make a welcome change, I will give my method of culture. Towards the end of February seeds should be sown singly in 3in. pots in heat. Grow the plants on in a light position near the glass and pot into 6in. pots when ready. Prepare mild hot-beds made up principally with leaves, on which frames should be placed. As soon as the heat begins to decline place sufficient soil made up of loam, leaf soil, and road scrapings to start the plants, leaving space for top-dressings. When all is well warmed the plants should be turned out, choosing the most favourable part of the day for the purpose. They should be treated in a similar way to Cucumbers, by stopping and thinning, and the fruits fertilised during the middle of the day; give air freely in mild weather, but avoid cold cutting winds, and shut up early in the afternoon. Little trouble will be found in procuring plenty of good fruit, and in addition to this, as soon as it is safe to do so, the lights and frames may be removed. The result is that the plants are in full bearing long before those grown in the ordinary way show signs of fruiting. I strongly advise all that may not have made the attempt, and have the means, to do so. It will not be the last time. Moore's Cream is the best variety to grow."

THE SEA BUCKTHORN.

One of the best object-lessons in the planting of this British tree (*Hippophae rhamnoides*) to be seen near London is contained in a group of plants growing near the pond in the Royal Gardens, Kew. For many years now it has furnished during autumn and early winter one of the brightest features of the grounds. The wood is yearly encased with bright orange-coloured berries, which remain on the branches all the winter, but later on, if hard frosts prevail, they become rather bleached and lose most of their brightness. Notwithstanding this, few things remain so long in beauty. As is—or ought now to be—well known, the flowers are unisexual, and those of one sex only are borne on a tree. Male trees, therefore, will not produce berries, nor will female trees do so unless a male is near enough for its pollen to reach them. This explains the disappointment that is frequently expressed about this tree being unfruitful. It is best planted in groups of, say, five to a dozen plants, one plant in every group being male; the rest female. The sex of the trees ought to be ascertained before they leave the nursery. Naturally the Sea Buckthorn is a small tree or large shrub; in gardens it may be kept low and shrubby if desired by pruning every few years. Kept to a single stem and its lower branches removed it makes a pretty standard tree. It occurs wild in Britain, chiefly on the south and south-east coasts.

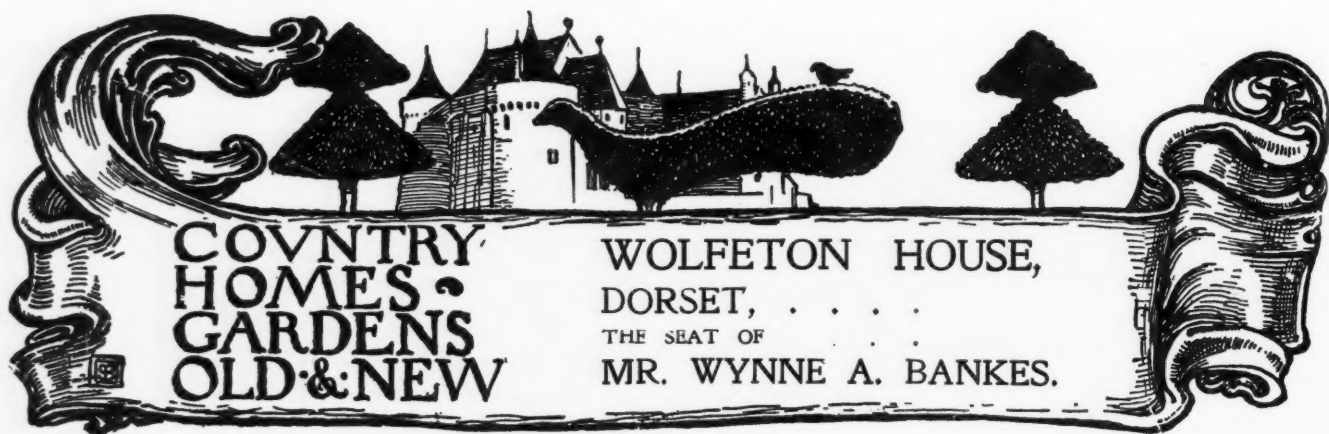
CATALOGUES RECEIVED.—Seeds: Messrs. J. Backhouse and Son, The Nurseries, York; John Forbes, Buccleuch Nurseries, Hawick, Scotland.



M. Emil Frechon.

TOO DRY AND SANDY TO PLEASE.

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WITHIN something more than a mile of Dorchester town, in the valley of the River Frome, stands one of the most interesting and characteristic houses in the whole county of Dorset. Wolfeton House, as the historian of the shire says, makes a grand appearance from

Exeter, one mile south of it, and it retains the features of different ages, and has many historic memories of its own, with a sweet and beautiful garden withal to add to its attractions. Into the ingenious theories which have been hazarded as to the origin of the name of Wolfeton, Wolveton, or Wolverton, let us not enter. Enough to know that it was anciently a possession of the Trenchards, who traced their descent from one Paganus of the name in the time of Henry I., and from Elizabeth, daughter of Edward I. They intermarried with many great families of the West, and Sir Thomas Trenchard, who died in 1505, built the house we depict, now the valued possession of Mr. Bankes. Sir Thomas was the grandson of the first Trenchard of Wolfeton, and the son of John Trenchard, whose house was partly incorporated in the new structure. A very noble mansion it is, with its principal fronts to the east and south, the north side being sheltered by a grove of trees. The south front is, indeed, entire,

and the east front is a fine example of the enriched style of Henry VII., while on the west are mullioned windows and semi-classic detail of James I.'s time added by Sir George Trenchard. The entrance is on the east, through a fine gatehouse, with ancient round towers of rare picturesqueness, giving admission to a small forecourt, where the richness and beauty of the structure, the

elegance of the many windows and carvings, and the characteristic boldness of the chimneys, impress the beholder. Framed in the mullions and transoms was, within memory, a magnificent array of stained windows (removed, unfortunately, by the last Trenchard of Wolfeton), whose storied armorial panes were a veritable history of the mansion, and in many a place bore the motto of Sir Thomas Trenchard—"Nosce teipsum." By good fortune some of the old glass was found at Bath, and restored to its place by the present proprietor.

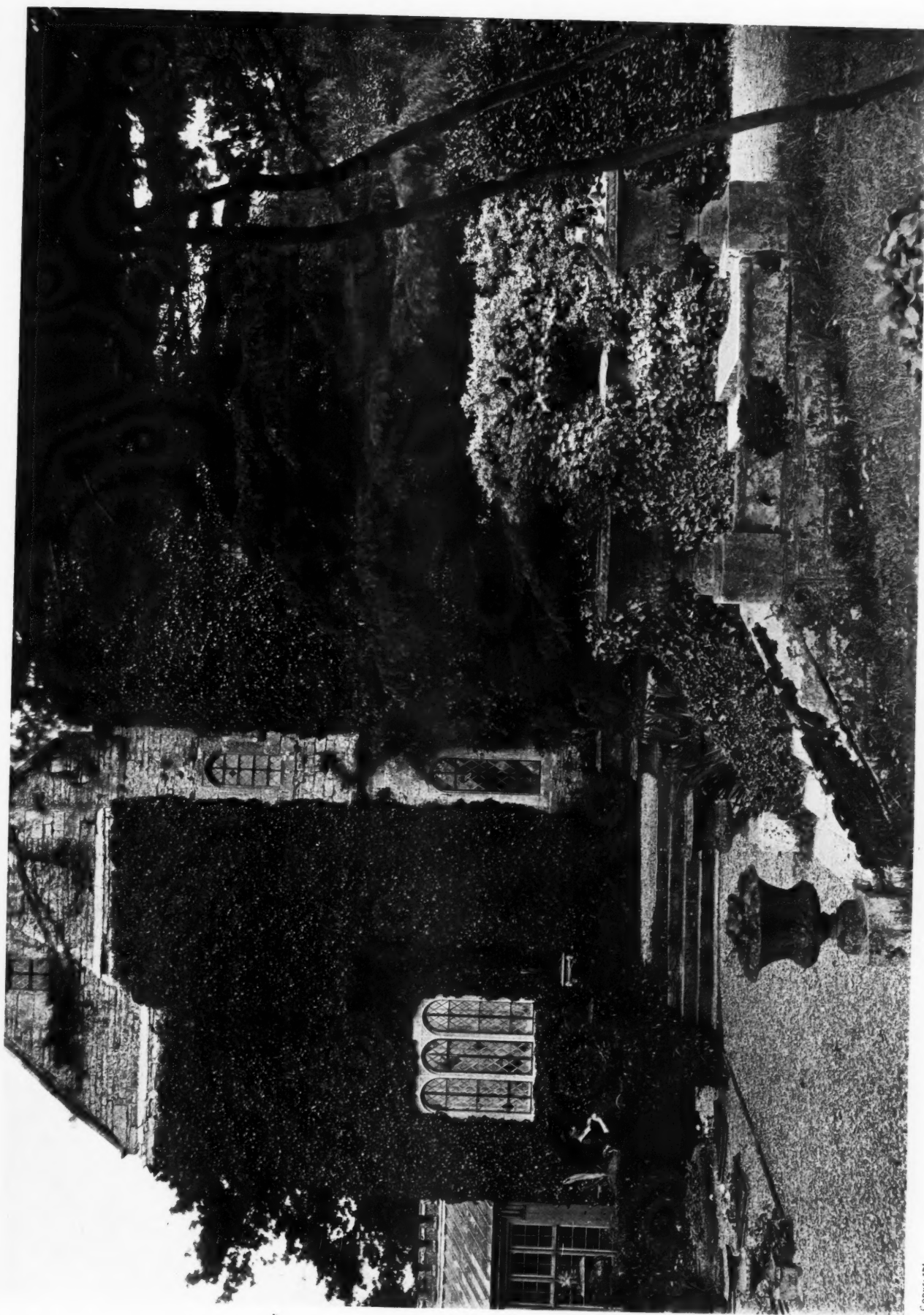
An interesting anecdote is told of Wolfeton House in Sir Thomas Trenchard's time, which shows that within its walls the fortunes of the Russells, Dukes of Bedford, began. (Grantley Berkeley's "Anecdotes.") Philip the Handsome, Archduke of Austria, accompanied by his wife Joanna, daughter of Ferdinand and Isabella, being on his way from the Low Countries to Spain in January, 1522, was driven to Weymouth by



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THE GARDEN DOOR.

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STONE VASES ON THE TERRACE.

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ANCIENT TOWERS.

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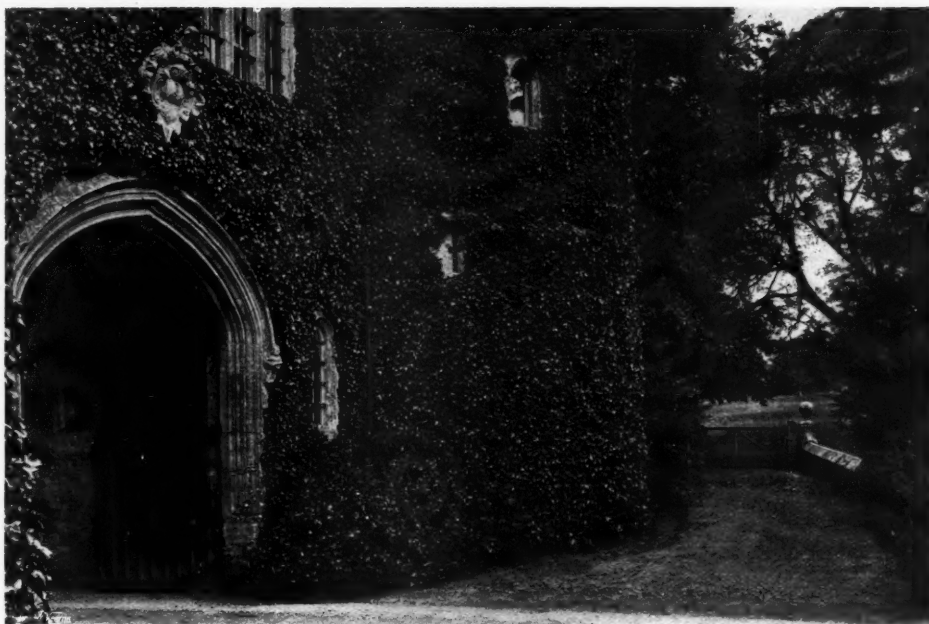
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A SOUTH VIEW.

"COUNTRY LIFE."

stress of weather, and the royal seafarers were hospitably received at Wolfe-ton by Sir Thomas Trenchard. The good knight knew no Spanish and his royal guests no English, but he bethought him of his young kinsman and neighbour John Russell of Kingston Russell, who was recently returned from Spain, and immediately sent for him to act as interpreter. The young man knew how to ingratiate himself with the royal Spaniards, and Philip, being pleased with him, afterwards intro-

duced him to Henry VII. as a man of ability "fit to stand before princes and not before meaner men." Thus did Russell go to Court and rise by his ability, and his family later on grew fat with monastic spoils. Philip was not unmindful of the courteous hospitality of Sir Thomas Trenchard, and on his departure presented to him two bowls of blue and white Oriental porcelain, which are still preserved, we believe, at Bloxworth House, near Wareham. One of the bowls is in an original Italian silver-gilt setting, curiously hinged. The grateful Spaniard is also believed to have sent to his host the magnificent carved chimney-piece in the great drawing-room, which we illustrate. It rises to the height of the wall, and is enframed in a carved entablature supported by lofty Corinthian pillars, within which are two sunken panels, with figures emblematic of Hope and Justice, while below are sculptured rural and hunting scenes, emblems of trades, satyrs, heads, etc. There is a second carved mantel-



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THE CREST IN THE IVY.

"COUNTRY LIFE."

piece in the same room, and a magnificent doorway, and the ceiling is covered with fine plaster work of early date.

To complete our description of the house, let it be said that the gatehouse, with its flanking towers and its priest's chamber, is probably the earliest part of the structure, and that the hall is rich in carving, and originally had over its mantel-piece fourteen kings of England, the last of them being Charles I. Those who will may believe gossiping old Aubrey's

story that, on November 3rd, 1640, the day when the Long Parliament began to sit, the sceptre fell from the carved hand of Charles, to the amazement and alarm of a large company assembled at dinner. Those who love the mysterious legends of our old houses may also like to be told another story of gruesome character, which some lover of the wonderful long ago told of the same hall at Wolfe-ton House. A certain judge of assize, being at Dorchester, was invited out to Wolfe-ton to meet a goodly company of the neighbourhood, but no sooner were the guests at table than the judge arose, called his carriage, and abruptly left the house. As he rode with his marshal along the dark lane to Dorchester he told the latter that as he sat at table he had seen behind Lady Trenchard a ghost or wraith of herself standing, with the throat of the spectre cut, and its head under its arm, and, as if to confirm the portent, they heard a galloping behind them, and a messenger arrived to



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FROM THE SOUTH LAWN.

"COUNTRY LIFE."



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THE OLD GATEHOUSE.

"COUNTRY LIFE."

say that her ladyship had in very fact committed suicide since they left.

The Trenchards, as may have been inferred from Aubrey's story, were adherents of the Parliament in the Civil Wars, and Sir Thomas Trenchard played an active part in the county as a commander on that side. He had been knighted by James I. at Theobalds in December, 1613, and he died in 1657. His son was also an ardent supporter of the cause, and his grandson, Sir John Trenchard, who lived until 1695, was a very prominent politician and bitter partisan, of whom Wood says that he was ready to promote "Oates his plot, busie against papists, the prerogative, and all that way." He attempted to dispute the title of the Duke of York to the throne, on the plea that the crown was held by statute law, was somewhat concerned with the Rye House Plot, was in danger in the time of Monmouth's rebellion, but fled with discretion, and later on showed great zeal against the Jacobites.

John Trenchard's eldest son, George Trenchard, married his cousin Mary, the heiress of Wolfeton, and did much to beautify the place, adding many of the later features. In that family the house remained until the beginning of the last century, when it was

purchased by Mr. James Henning, passing later on to the hands of Mr. Bankes. But the devices and arms of the Trenchards still remain in the house they so long inhabited, and the splendid tower of the neighbouring church of Charminster has the rebus of Sir Thomas Trenchard, who added it, about the year 1500, to the massive Norman structure, wherein the mutilated monuments of his family are.

For the special charms of Wolfeton House our pictures are warrant enough. They also reveal how lovely are the surroundings of that ancient abode. Ivy clothes those splendid flanking towers of the gateway, as if fondly vesting their venerable age, and it will be divined how superb are the colour contrasts between the cool stonework and the dark hue of the

clinging green. Those who care for the place are judicious in curbing the vigorous luxuriance of the old growth, which otherwise would conceal structural and decorative features, and perhaps do damage by its close embrace. Ivy is also upon the house itself, and upon the splendid old barn, but nowhere to the detriment of the architecture, and often in friendly neighbourhood to other evergreen climbers which have good footage there. The level expanse of lawn of



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THE FORECOURT

"COUNTRY LIFE."

the south side is the frontage to an exquisite picture, and the grouping with the green surroundings is most delightful. On the north side was a little cloister leading to what was the chapel, but it was pulled down some time since. Yet the old chapel garden is there to delight, and is the fairest retreat we could wish for an evening in summer. Or we may linger, if we will, on the low terrace by the house, where rhododendrons are in glorious masses, with aromatic azaleas, and a multitude of sweet and beautiful blossoms. The feathery foliage overhead gives shade enough, but the skilful gardener has apportioned all things well, not jeopardising his flowers for the sake of his trees, nor stinting the masses of green, which give character and harmony to the whole. The pleasure grounds cover about fourteen acres, and constitute a realm of beauty, where man and Nature may commune in one of the fairest spots in beautiful

Dorsetshire. It is a county made famous by the novels of Thomas Hardy, many of whose Wessex scenes are found hereabout. There is variety in it, and a subtle charm wherever we go. Traverse it from north to south and you will admire its contrasts and variety. From the land of rich meadows and farms embowered amid gardens and woods, where many productive dairies are, you reach the chalk hills and downs which lie between that radiant country and the sea, and when, from ancient Dorchester, you have climbed the heights, what a prospect is there, for before you lie the broad expanse of Weymouth Bay, the lofty bulk of Portland Bill, and the wide western sea. It is in a hollow in the hills traversed by the River Frome that Wolfeton stands, and certainly in itself and its surroundings it is one of the most charming among the many charming houses of the West Country.

THINGS ABOUT OUR NEIGHBOURHOOD.

"I THINK," said the Countess, who had ridden over, "that you manage wonderfully. The proof is that you get comfort. Now I don't."

I like being complimented about my housekeeping; it is still a sufficiently new study with me, and I had been afraid my Continental ideas would not work out well in an English household; but they have.

"But then, this is such a small place," I replied, comfortingly. "Of course it is much easier. We have actually only room for six people at a time, whereas you——"

"Exactly. I have room for about twenty; but as we are too poor to have twenty, or too lazy to want twenty, I am no better off." She smacked her habit once or twice, and looked

troubled. I am always sorry for the Countess. "The only things that ever get done with us are the things that had better be left undone," she went on. "I came round by the Brickfield Coverts. Somehow I had forgotten the wood-gate key, and a man had actually been round and mended the little gap I always use when I have Roger. Roger, as you know, has only three legs, and can't jump a beehive; but he knew that gap, and liked to think he was fencing, poor old dear. As it was, I had to try back and come all the way round by the marl-pits and down Cleastor Old Lane. It took another half-hour. All that time I was thinking about Ryman."

"You are not really thinking of parting with her?"
Mrs. Ryman is the housekeeper at the Court.

"I am *always* thinking about parting with her," said the Countess, despondently. "Sometimes I wake up to find there had been nothing else in my mind for about ten days except Ryman and parting with her."

I couldn't help smiling, though, after all, it is not kind to smile at people's difficulties; the Countess's old servants are her leading difficulty. Esmeralda has no sympathy in the matter; she thinks that if people want very much to do a thing they do it, but I know that that isn't true of all temperaments. Esmeralda further says the Countess's *laissez aller* is either affectation, or it is preposterous. She can't understand the predicament of a woman who sits and longs for the moment at which the butler will come and say he has decided to take a public-house—so that she can have a new butler; or the head-gardener remark that thirty years of it is a round term, and he thinks of retiring to look after his property in the town—so that she can have a new head-gardener; and so on. I can. I can sympathise, too. If you are born tired and easy-going and lazy—or if somehow people round you have agreed to think you are these things—it is very difficult indeed to brace up and dismiss a lot of people who have always been round you, and who, quite unconsciously, are making your life a burden.

I shall never forget our poor neighbour's almost girlish excitement last August, when her maid Paston, who had of course started a bicycle, broke her leg in two places, poor soul, and could be honourably retired to the care of a sister who was a milliner at Bath. It was positively touching.

"My dear child," she said to me, with a sudden grip of both hands on my arm, "you simply won't know my hair!" And it has been much looser over her ears and much less heavily netted down as to her fringe ever since the new woman came.

She even discussed in a whisper whether Mrs. Ryman could be induced to take to bicycling, and then hushed herself into silence like a naughty child.



Copyright

WOLFETON; THE SPANISH CHIMNEY-PIECE.

"C.L."

Things were better with them this summer, for they let the place for three months, and it was delightfully clean and tidy for them when they got back. The tenants had brought an excellent staff, and everything was in beautiful order.

"But then I hate having to go away all the summer just in order to have my own house made as I like it. No, the more I think of it the more I see that I am sacrificing the best years of my life to Ryman; she simply must go."

"Why not tell her so?" enquired Esmeralda, who was in the room that day when the Countess came in, and had remained.

"H'm?" was the only reply, with a vague eye. "Tell her to go?—I don't for a moment think she would go! And then Wynne says" (Wynne is her equally lazy, good-natured husband) "that one *must* consider her past services. Having been his nurse and his mother's maid before that, and having kept his poor epileptic brother alive *much* longer than he *need* have been kept alive—which meant keeping Wynne out of the place for years, don't you know—one can't do anything harsh."

"But a pension?"

"Yes, of course; but she doesn't want a pension. She wants to stay and manage the house all wrong for another fifteen years. Sometimes we have wondered if it would not be better *not* to let the Charles Street house, and put her in there and just keep it open and go up for a very few weeks in the Season—all the time that Wynne can be induced to leave the Court for; but against that you have to set the fact of the really delightful breathing spell we have at Cummins's Hotel in Dover Street,



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THE CHAPEL GARDEN AT WOLFETON HOUSE.

"COUNTRY LIFE."

where they know us so well and where I like the rooms, and it is such a rest to be, with only the three servants."

The Countess flushes with a sort of rapture as she recalls this almost Bohemian experience of her Mays and Junes, and I can quite appreciate the fun she gets out of it.

"You know we had the most tremendous excitement the Christmas before last because it came to me through Paston that Turner had actually screwed up his courage to ask Ryman to marry him." (Turner is head-gardener at the Court.) "She must be sixty at least, and he is only a year or two younger. They have despised each other cordially for years, but it seemed possible that that was their method of cloaking a really solid regard. Then, you see, they would *both* have gone, and it would have meant a new era for us—almost like inheriting over again. I can't tell you how eager we were. Wynne hung about in the chrysanthemum house, throwing a word or two to Turner now and then, and trying to give him an opening to say something. I almost made up my mind to lead up to an avowal from Ryman. The world seemed full of possibilities for both of us, and we used to sit up in the billiard-room at night planning out things. Wynne said, after the marriage it would be better to shut up the Court for at least two months, and pretend it was going to be six, so as to have an excuse to get rid of everybody almost, and we could just have kept the few we like (who are, I suppose, the ones we don't know much) on board wages in the usual way, or given them holidays or something . . . but of course it was too good to be true;

it fell through somehow. Paston hinted that they were disappointed about each other's savings. Ryman had been putting into a Building Society recommended by her nephew, and had lost quite a lot of money, and then it came out that Turner's property in the town was not going to be wanted by the Railway Company, for their new goods station extension, which would have meant a round sum; and they quarrelled, I believe, quite fatally!"

I think I broke down and roared with laughter; her *dolour* was so comic.

"It is all very well for you, Ermyngarde, who have none of these restrictions to cope with. If you want to get rid of all your copper cooking things and have nice French pots, you can do it; there is no Ryman to work upon your cook and incite her to violence. If you want to abolish that ridiculous survival of a linen-maid who sits and darns things that one doesn't want darned—your hands are free. Why, pray, should I have to keep a woman, at five-and-twenty pounds of wages and forty pounds of 'keep' to darn house linen, when I could replace the wear and tear every year for a twenty-pound note and spend the forty-five saved on something really useful? Such a ridiculous fad of English life, that linen-maid—so unreasonable and stupid; but one can do nothing, absolutely nothing, that one wants to do! I heard of a most excellent *chef* who wanted—who actually wanted to live in the country; but I knew it was no use beginning with the man—he would never have stood Ryman."

"Why can't you tell her that you want to see her in a home of her own, and offer to furnish it for her—and then with the pension—"

"That is *not* practical, my dear. I did once begin to say something about a milder climate—it was two years ago when she was threatened with dropsy and had to have a wheel-chair to go down the corridors. . . . Not the least use. She threw the epileptic brother at me, as I knew she would, and of course I did the only thing possible and let it all go."

"Well, then, what about subsidising Turner? Couldn't you do that? Couldn't you—"

"Buy her a boarding-house at Bournemouth," broke in Esmeralda, "or a Nursing Home; that was what Aunt Pleydell did with one of her people—you remember, Ermyngarde? I forget which it was, but I know she bought her one or other, and it only meant about a thousand down, which she thought exceedingly reasonable, considering."

"Some kind of a reform is wanted in connection with this subject," the Countess said, with the sudden air of a responsible

legislator. "One ought not to have to be heartless, or to be considered heartless, about it; one ought not to submit to a system which has such coils and toils. As it is, there is nothing but to wait for somebody to die in cases like these. All over England there are miserable people like myself and Wynne keeping up establishments for persons like Turner, and Ryman, and Blunt (Blunt is the butler major-domo person who is also a thorn, though not quite so sharp a one). Something is fundamentally wrong about it. But, as I say, nothing but death relieves it. Somebody has to die, and as we are the most worried (for, after all, *they* are perfectly happy!) it will no doubt be us."

After which lugubrious pronouncement she called for her horse, and rode sadly home.

A PLOUGHING MATCH.

PLOUGHING is perhaps the most picturesque work on the land that we have left. There is something so full of the earth, so touched with the poetry of the soil, in the patient bend of the horse, in the stride of the ploughman after the plough, in the gleam of the up-turned furrow. On the street of the town the ploughman is no graceful figure, but in the fields, guiding the plough with his two hands and calling his "heck, heck" to the horses, he seems at one with the earth and the grey sky, with the seagull and crow that hover over him; and the Greek youth throwing the disc, or gladiator in his poised proportionate grace, has more of that inner beauty of things that is touched with the *Weltschmerz* than has the ploughman guiding his plough. Not for the grace

or the beauty of the thing, however, are the ploughing matches held. Here the picturesque element is not found, but the art of ploughing well.

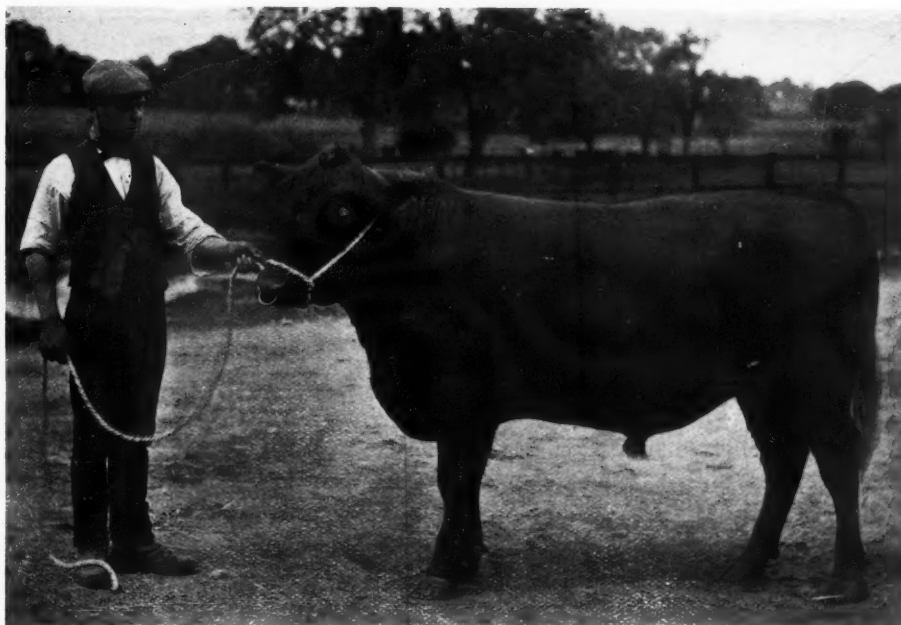
Usually on a February morning, the figures begin to gather in some field on a bleak hillside for the ploughing match. For the most part composed of farmers and farm labourers, the groups are only here and there enlivened by the bright shawls of the women field-workers who have come to see their favourites try for a prize. Sometimes a few farmers' wives will drive up to watch the ploughing and admire the horses, but, for the most part, the men have it to themselves. With the ploughmen it is a great day. They arrive from all parts, flowers in their button-holes, and with their horses beautifully groomed, tails and manes pleated and tied with fluttering red and yellow ribbons. Harnessings are polished and brass mountings shine like gold, for prizes are not only given for the best ploughing, but for the finest groomed and most smartly turned out horses also.

When all have gathered in the field, stakes are driven into the ground and the work of the day begins. The ploughman always has his horses beautifully trained. Much is written, and deservedly, about the shepherd's dog. The ploughman's horse gets less credit for his intelligence, his guide less praise for

the love and patience which make the animals answer to a word from his mouth, or a touch of his hand on the thin rope of the reins. The first aim in ploughing is, of course, to have the furrow straight, as the crow flies, and it is really fine to see the thin straight brown line an expert can draw across the green of the field with no guide but a stake driven into the ground, the horses responding to every word that keeps them from swerving to right or left. Each furrow must be the same width throughout and cleanly turned, and its depth must be uniform. Your inexperienced hand digs the plough deep into the ground, thereby not only exhausting his horses, but cutting through the fertile layer of soil to the clay beneath which grows no grain. The prize-winner knows his depth to an inch, and keeps to it throughout the length of the furrow. When each man has finished his portion the judging takes place, and the prizes are given, usually of money, but sometimes a silver medal is offered, which adds greatly to the attraction of the match and is eagerly competed for among the farm hands. At an early hour in the afternoon the groups break up, and pair after pair of horses clank away over the different roads to the shouts and laughter of the men. Then another company gathers on the scene, and black crow and grey seagull strut solemnly about the deserted field grubbing worms.

CHILDWICK FARM STOCK.

CHILDWICK may be described as a very typical example of the pleasure farms lying quite close to London, and kept up for place and amusement by our merchant princes. It is within easy reach of the city, so that the owner, Sir Blundell Maple, may breakfast at no unearthly hour in the morning, and yet be in town at the usual business time. Some description of the rustic pursuits with which, in the character of Squire Maple, he reinvigorates himself for the sterner work of life may not be without interest to our readers. Of the most celebrated feature, the racing stud, little shall be said, as it has been dealt with by our sporting contributor; but if thorough-breds were not so expensive, how one would like to recommend them as mere ornaments to a country house! It may be true, as Sir Walter Gilbey holds, that the "racing machine" of to-day is too tall and leggy, too deficient in bone and substance, but nothing that runs is more graceful than the young colts and fillies. Elegant in contour, and exquisite in all their motions, yet full of spirit and fire, they are very pleasant to watch at play in the paddock on a sunny day. And even one who is no turfite can appreciate the pleasure of seeing the veterans of the stable brought out, and hearing the tale of their struggles and victories. The thorough-bred undoubtedly enjoys the contest, but is it too fantastic to imagine that the aged Derby winner retains some memory of that great day on the Downs, his tremendous exertions, the fierce competition, the cheering of the crowd? His owner is not likely to forget them, at any rate. Nor shall we dilate on the pleasures of



C. Reid.

CHILDWICK BLACK PRINCE.

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the garden and the hothouse, though at Childwick the avocation of Adam is pursued with such zeal and success as to win many prizes. But at this season of the year it were only imitating Tantalus or the inventor of his punishment to wax eloquent over ripe grapes and luscious pears and mellow apples—these are for long summer days and a temperature of godeg. However, the farm is always with us. Nature and art have combined to perfect it. Any visitor may see by the magnitude of the trees what feeding qualities are in the soil, and they effect animal as well as vegetable, as was proved at Christmas when Sir Blundell had his first sale of fat cattle. The custom of keeping both pedigree and market stock is one worthy of being more widely followed than is the case, although it is extending on many model estates. After all, the ultimate object of breeding cattle is for purposes of food. Show points are valuable only so far as they indicate a butcher's or a dairy value. It is absurd, for instance, that at many a show the cow which wins at the milking and butter trials has previously failed to obtain a prize on inspection. Every case of the kind ought to be followed by a revision of points or a revision of judges, and this opinion has gained ground within the last few years.

On an English estate there can be no more appropriate breed of cattle than the shorthorn, and Sir Blundell Maple, as will be seen from our photographs, is the possessor of a fine herd. He likes them of the best blood, but is not keen on showing them. Those shown were without exception bred at Childwick. They are Childwick Prince, a young bull calved in January, 1899. He is by Sir Launcelot out of May Duchess. The very pretty heifer Childwick Duchess is from the same dam, by Sire Childwick, and we also show a compact, good-



C. Reid.

LAMPLIGHTER OF SOUTHGATE.

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LITTLE GEM.

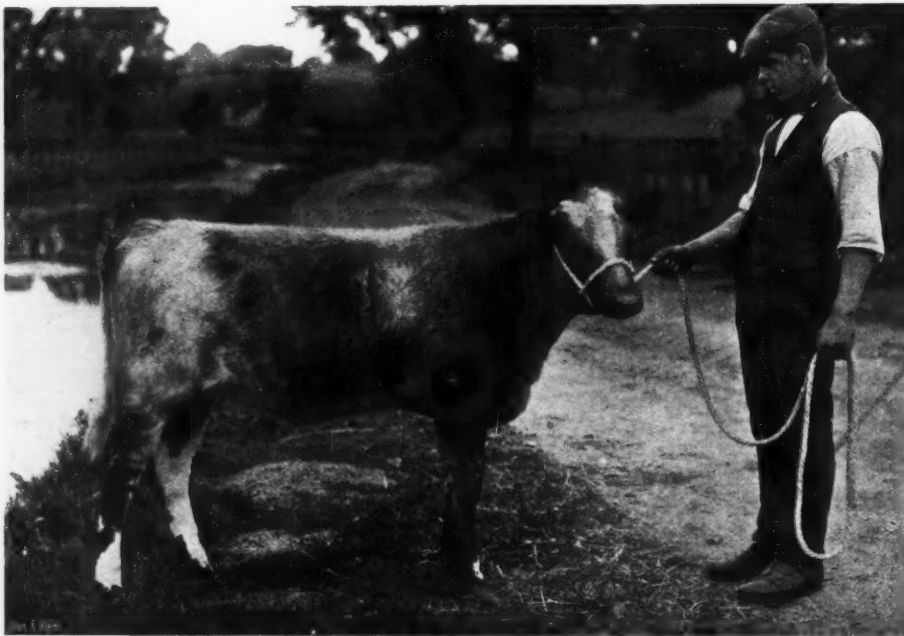
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CHILDWICK PRINCE.

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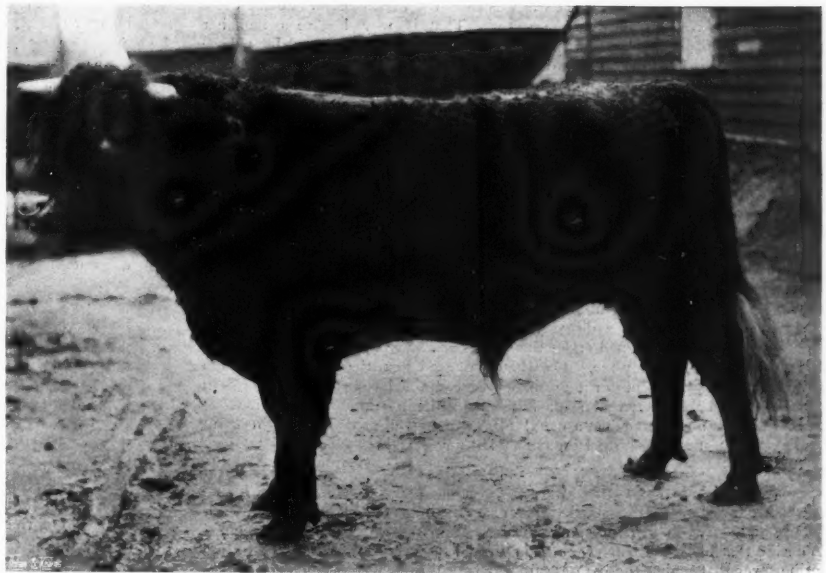
CHILDWICK DUCHESS.

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looking young bull in Childwick, calved in 1900. In addition to the shorthorns, there are some excellent cattle of the fashionable Aberdeen-Angus breed. Only a few years ago it would have been necessary to go to Scotland for really typical specimens of polled Angus, but the breed has now become a favourite on English estates, and last year the prize-winners at the leading shows came from southern herds. It would be superfluous to dwell on the fact that the Aberdeen-Angus is pre-eminently a butcher's beast—the far-famed Scottish beef is its product. As in nearly all breeds of cattle, one will occasionally turn out a first-rate milker, but milk-giving never has been a quality much attributed to the Aberdeen-Angus. Any competent judge would, from its mere appearance, pronounce it no general-purpose cow like the shorthorn, but one whose destiny was to become "prime joints." Sir Blundell Maple is able to show a number of very typical examples. Lamplighter, for instance, is quite a famous bull. For two years in succession he carried off the first prize at Peterborough, and since then has cut a great figure at Hatfield and other local shows. Black Prince, calved in 1900, though he has not won so many distinctions, is a very good bull, and when shown at Hatfield in 1901 carried off the first prize against all comers. The heifer, Little Gem, has a curiously similar career, she too having been shown for the first and only time at Hatfield, where she won against two and three year old competitors. On the whole, it is an admirable little herd, not aspiring to honours of the highest class, yet consisting of excellent and typical examples of the breed. And probably that is one of the best breeds to keep for those who wish to have fine animals about their place, yet are not ambitious of entering into competition with those who have made the breed their special hobby. The truth is that Sir Blundell Maple takes most delight in his thorough-breds and those splendid Shires that we illustrated some weeks ago, while the others are kept, so to speak, only for the purpose of "filling in the picture." In other words, they give a feeling of completion to the home farm.

Horses, cows, sheep, pigs, and poultry—are these not the mainstay of a farm's livestock? Now that we have glanced at the first-mentioned, a word may be said as to the sheep. These have never been shown, so that there is nothing to be set down in the way of record. But pleasure farming would become an endless worry if every owner were discontented unless all the creatures in his possession were able to carry off show-yard honours. To take a particular pride in one kind of livestock, and to amuse one's self by getting to the top of the tree as far as it is concerned, is a pleasure; but to have several, and to be equally anxious about all of them, may be a mere worry. To avoid this, Sir Blundell Maple has not so far troubled himself to enter his flock for competition. The only thing that makes this look strange is the close association that Hampshire Downs always have had with "the fancy." But in reality the vogue they enjoy at show-yards comes from their merits for private purposes. They are, to begin with, a very handsome breed, with their black heads, massive figures, short wool, and general air of dignity, which they, in our opinion, carry to

greater perfection than any other breed whatsoever. This is not so much noticed, because the custom is to huddle them together in folds for feeding under circumstances which do not tend to set off their good looks. But when seen individually, even the ewes with their lambs are a pleasure to the eye. As the old proverb has it, however, handsome is that handsome does; and it is chiefly because they are so serviceable that Hampshires are to be commended. They are good to eat. To this, of course, we know the objection of the gourmet. His cardinal principle is that the true flavour of mutton only comes with age, and that to have perfection you must procure Welsh sheep three or four years old. About all creatures that come very early to maturity there is a certain similarity of taste, or rather of tastelessness. Forced rhubarb has not the flavour of that grown naturally, a crammed chicken, tender as it is, has lost something that belonged to the bird fattened naturally in the barnyard, and these early maturing lambs also lose in flavour what they gain in tenderness. In all this there is a certain amount of truth, but the argument carries fastidiousness further than the average lover of good eating would care to follow. He who is not satisfied with Hampshire Down mutton deserves to be reduced to a fish diet. Those who desire that their spring lamb should come from their own folds and pastures can do no



CHILDWICK SHORTHORN BULL.

better than keep this breed of sheep. They may then easily have their own joints for Whitsuntide. In this flock you have the best of looks backed up by sterling quality.

We have glanced only in a cursory manner at the most outstanding features of the farm at Childwick. There are some more, such as the poultry arrangements, to which at a later day we may perhaps recur, but already enough has been written to afford a fair idea of the character of a typical pleasure-farm near London. There are many of these farms, some within easy driving distance of the city, yet so secluded that the visitor might fancy himself hundreds of miles distant from the heart of busy London.

WILD . . . COUNTRY LIFE.

A HARE'S TASTES AND VIEWS.

A HARE has a violent dislike for the scent of a boot with a human foot inside it. One might have guessed this, but the other morning I had ocular evidence of the fact.

Wandering down a footpath which runs parallel to a long dyke, I saw a hare coming in rather a hurry to meet me. So I stood still, and the hare came scampering along until it was within a few yards, and then catching sight of my figure against the sky it stopped abruptly and sat up sideways to have a good look at me with one eye. Birds and those animals which have their eyes placed at the sides of their heads, like hares, must, by the way, have peculiarly independent optic nerves. When they cock their heads to one side to take a good look at a thing, what is the other eye looking at? Whenever we want to look at a thing we focus it with both eyes, although it may be visible to one only. But the hare cannot turn the other eye round in its socket, nor does he close it. He must therefore be staring blankly at the landscape on one side while he is examining an object on the other!

FROM ONE DANGER TO ANOTHER.

This feat my hare performed for about five seconds, and then, concluding that I had not observed her, she very quietly turned round and retraced her steps, stepping carefully lest she should attract attention. But she had not gone twenty paces before it evidently occurred to her that she was going straight back to the place from which she had fled, and at the thought she darted off at right angles up the slope and over the brow of the land. From habit one always keeps one's eye upon the track by which a frightened hare has come, because sometimes you will see a stoat coming along it. More often



C. Reid.

THREE SHEARLING EWES.

Copyright—"C.L."



C. Reid.

HAMPSHIRE DOWN SHEEP.

Copyright—"C.L."

it is only another hare, as happened in this case, the first hare being evidently a female flying from an unwelcome suitor. That is why I have called her "she" and not from the sporting pedantry that makes even a Jack hare "she." Before I caught sight of her pursuer, I had passed the point at which she went off at right angles, and to this fact I owe my discovery of the violent dislike which a hare has for the human boot.

AN AWFUL SHOCK.

For the second hare was following the first by scent, and came lolloping steadily along the path with his nose to the ground. When he arrived within a few yards he suddenly caught sight of me and sat up, abruptly and sideways, as she had done. Presently he stooped down and smelt the ground, and then came on again. If he had been a human being, you would have said that he had during those few seconds reasoned out the matter, deciding that I could not be a live man, because she had only just passed that way and the scent showed that she had gone straight on. Still, he did not quite like it, and came on very slowly; and I, not daring to remove the glasses through which I had been observing his approach, found myself at last absurdly trying to focus a hare just before my feet. So I peeped under the glasses and saw him stretch out his neck and take one sniff at my toe. Of what happened next the hare cannot retain any very clear impression, for if my boot had contained a charge of dynamite it could hardly have blown him off faster than the horrid conviction that he had poked his nose up against a man! If in that awful crisis he thought about his sweetheart at all, he must have concluded that I had eaten her.

VICTIMS OF SPRING FEVER.

When the hare has spring fever, however, no panic lasts long, and before he had gone 50 yds. the startled lover stopped again, sniffed the ground, sat up, and stared in my direction. As I was now moving, however, he seemed to decide that his worst fears were realised, and sadly limped away. The same spring fever that makes the hare absurd has spread even to our winter migrants. The flocks of larks and plovers have mostly broken up, and even the fieldfares may be seen giving themselves airs before each other in the fields. Very handsome the fieldfare looks, too, at such a time, displaying his auburn mantle, pale grey back, and very dark tail, which he flirts upwards fanwise like a blackbird. Even the hoodie crows seem to have paired off, for they may be seen sitting in silent solitary couples by the edges of the dykes or on some vantage tree whence they command a large view of the country. But wherever the hoodie sits you may be sure that he is meditating mischief, if mischief be possible.

HOODIES' SINISTER PROCEEDINGS.

A few mornings ago I passed through a sunny field where some fifty ewes with new-born lambs were grazing. There were some scores of jackdaws among or near the sheep, and a pair of hoodie crows. All flew away as I approached, but looking back from the further gate I saw that the two hoodie crows had returned. They were hopping about in their sinister sidelong way, now and then taking short flights and shuffling their wings on alighting in the manner which always indicates that crow-birds have some object in view. Indeed, when one of them walked round a lamb that was lying on the ground, the ewe seemed to approach at once, as if to drive the bird away. But two of the lambs were lying out alone in the middle of the field, and I argued that if the crows meant mischief they would attack these. Besides, the shepherds had told me that the hoodies did no harm to the flocks hereabouts, because both the ewes and their young were too well looked after at lambing-time, and afterwards when they were turned into the fields the birds did not attempt to touch them. So I passed on, supposing that, in spite of their suspicious behaviour, these two hoodies were among the sheep on the same innocent errand as the jackdaws.

THE TRAGEDY.

Next day the same flock of sheep were in the field, but there was a crow-scarer with a gun in charge of them. The "Harry-Denshmen"—the local name by which hoodie crows are known in North Norfolk, "Denshmen" meaning Danish men or Danish crows—he explained, had killed two lambs. They were lying asleep in the sun, when the crows set upon them and picked out their eyes. The tragedy probably took place immediately after I had passed, and perhaps the birds, so long as I was in the field, had the cunning not to go near the two unprotected lambs in the open, although intending all the while to attack them so soon as the coast was clear. The event, however, had more than justified my suspicions, based on long familiarity with the black and grey crows of India. Watching these through the open doors of the bungalow, you soon learned to tell from their manner of moving about and the shuffling of their

wings when they contemplated some risky mischief, such as pilfering a dog's bone or raiding the punkah coolie's dinner.

UNWELCOME AND WELCOME GUESTS.

In a very short while, however, the last of the lambs will be too strong for the crows; but we shall all be glad to see the last of the "Denshmen." When the weather is neither cold nor stormy, there is no harvest of dead things for them, and necessity makes them bold. They are such persistent egg thieves, too, that scarcely one of the early misel-thrushes' nests escapes. The wild pink-footed geese appear to be already leaving us, for scarcely scores are now to be seen, clanging across the sky, where there were hundreds in midwinter. But we shall be as sorry to lose the geese as glad to miss the hoodie crow; for there is always an irrepressible feeling of elation attendant upon the view of these grand birds, wheeling in squadrons overhead and commanding the attention of us groundlings with their barbaric clamour.

A "WILD GOOSE CHASE."

It was with an irrepressible feeling of elation, too, that I embarked the other day upon a real "wild goose chase" over a mile of salt marsh and dykes. Some shore gunner had wounded a wild goose, and I happened to come upon it suddenly in a quiet corner of the marsh close to the sand flats. To catch a goose with a broken wing looks an easy job, and I did not hurry at first, because I did not want to hustle the poor creature, lest it should hurt itself. My idea was to drive it quietly off the marshes, when I could easily capture it on the "greens" that fringe the seaward farmland. There were only three dyke bridges to cross, and after dexterously heading the bird from one side and the other scores of times, performing prodigies of agility and mud-splashing in leaping small dykes which it had scrambled through, I got the goose safely over two of the bridges and up to the third and longest, which spans the big creek. Here the aggravating bird, instead of crossing the bridge, hurried down the deep mud bank into the water, and when I arrived on the scene it promptly dived.

HE KNEW THE GAME.

About 10 yds., however, seems to be the limit of the goose's cruise as a submarine, and it was plainly visible below the surface all the while. So, every time that it rose to the surface, I shouted or flung up my arms or threw something to persuade it to climb out on the opposite side. I did not notice that each dive was bringing us nearer to a large cross dyke which I could not attempt to leap, and when the goose emerged for about the tenth time, but now just a yard or two beyond this dyke, I fancied that he floated more complacently on the water, as though his task were achieved. There was nothing for it, of course, but to hark back to the second bridge, and so come level with the goose again; but when I arrived the bird was nowhere to be seen. I found its tracks, however, on the mud of the next cross dyke, and followed them up with great success, inasmuch that they brought me back to the beginning of the sand flats, where, by the way, the tide was now coming in. So there was nothing for it but to abandon the goose and get back to the bridges without delay. As I went I noticed that the snow was everywhere criss-crossed with the tracks of a goose and human footmarks following them. I must have been only "another of 'em" to that goose with the broken wing. Probably he knew that journey "over two bridges and into the water at the third" by heart; and I know now why a "wild goose chase" has become a synonym for pursuit that is foredoomed to be fruitless.

E. K. R.

RACING NOTES.

"GENTLEMEN, 'The King.'" For the first time within the memory of living man we have seen the King of England running his own horses under his own name, and watching their success with just the same amount of pleasurable interest which might be exhibited under the same circumstances by any other owner who had not the same claims to notoriety. The victories of Ambush II., as most of us know, are two in number, but the first differs very considerably from the second. The first was a race, at any rate, of sorts, although it is true that only three horses ran, and that of these three one, to wit Drogheda, the great winner of the Grand National, would seem to have lost all his old form, while on behalf of the defeated King David it is claimed that he hit his leg in running, and thus destroyed what at one time appeared to be an excellent chance of success. Personally, and I watched the race very closely, I do not think that this was so, being rather inclined to take the view that the extra half mile was too much for him, and that when two miles had been covered he had run himself to a standstill, leaving Ambush II. to win how, when, and where he pleased. That he was outrun easily is a question of past history, but, at the same time, I entirely fail to see anything in the performance which either enhances his merit as a race-horse or justifies people in taking the absurdly small price at which he has been quoted since the decision of this race. As readers can see for themselves by the photographs which accompany this article, Ambush II. is by no means an ideal steeple-chaser in appearance, and in other ways he fails to resemble Cloister, or Manifesto, or The Colonel, or any of the great horses who may justly claim to be looked upon as heroes in this connection. Although a big horse in point of height, being well over 16h., he presents a curiously cobby appearance, and in his method he is more like a careful hunter than a dashing, clashing winner of the Grand National who stands well back at his fences and takes them in his stride. Indeed, strictly speaking, he does not fly his fences at all, as the expression is generally understood. Waiting until he is almost on to his fence, he rises suddenly, and, landing a little heavily loses an appreciable amount of ground at each fence, which is, of course, against him in a fast run race, although, as his record has shown, he is quite capable of conceding this trifling point to all his opponents. Again, his action when galloping cannot be honestly described as taking



W. A. Rouch. AMBUSH II. AND DROGHEDA COMING OUT.

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but, as the old vet. said, they go "in all shapes and in all forms," and he certainly does gallop in his own way, although, even as a zealous patriot and subject, I cannot see how his chance at Aintree is anything like as good as it has been made out. The thing, however, which his backers can safely afford to ignore, is his miserable and slovenly display at Hurst Park on the occasion when he beat his stable companion Monaghan. To begin with, the result was a foregone conclusion, while the pace at which the race was run was a wretched one, so that the mistakes which the King's horse made can be safely attributed to laziness.

Of his jumping powers he has given adequate proof in the past, and it is claimed for him, by those who know best, that he has never yet fallen, either at home or in public, and we know that the Aintree country possesses no terrors for him, while his path has been made the smoother by the collapse of Drogheda and Grudon. Before passing on, it may be said with safety that Ambush II. possesses a good open chance of success in the big race, but that the incident of his Royal ownership and the fact of his former success have combined to exaggerate his merit and to throw a spurious glamour over his career.

One promising feature of the Grand National this year is the fact that there are several young horses engaged in it who have some pretensions to comparative excellence, and, speaking generally, I should say that it is some years since three such promising horses as Drumcree, Inquisitor, and Easter Ogue were engaged in this race together, while another animal—to wit, Drumree—is by no means to be despised, in spite of the fact that he has been but recently sold to Mr. Nugent for the distinctly mediocre price of 2,500 guineas. Jockeys, that is to say our leading steeplechase jockeys, are still unsettled and restless in the matter of mounts, although Anthony, Donnelly, and Mr. A. W. Wood are all fixed up, while Mason is still disengaged, being a little undecided in his own mind as to which mount to accept, as he has a sneaking fancy for Buffalo Bill. Anthony, of course, will ride Ambush II. for the King,



W. A. Rouch.

AMBUSH II. ROACHES HIS BACK.

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been entered in the same class, the very best harness type predominating greatly. Consequently, great merit attached to the victory of Sir Walter Gilbey's Bonny Danegelt, whose successor, Mr. Battle's Garton Sirdar, occupied the same position behind him last year. The latter is also a very fine colt, but rather the sort which would be better served by a larger judging-ring than that at the Agricultural Hall, else he would scarcely have been so closely pressed as he was on Tuesday by Mr. Thomas's chestnut St. Thomas, though the latter is far above the ordinary run of merit. In stallions five years old and over, between 14h. and 15h. high, Mr. John Makeig's Autocrat, a real good sort, enjoyed a very easy victory, whilst in the between 15h. and 15h. 2in. section Sir Walter Gilbey's grandly-built, fine-actioned Royal Danegelt got home from Mr. Hewitt's stylish Umberto without any great effort, Mr. Yates's typical Acid Drop making a good third. The stallions over 15h. 2in. were a wonderfully good lot of 38, amongst which Sir Gilbert Greenall's chestnut Clifton III. was conspicuous as being, perhaps, the finest walker that has been seen for many a long day. A special feature of the show was the soundness of the stallions, as out of the 177 examined, no fewer than 169 were passed by the veterinary inspectors of the show.



W. A. Rouch.

KING DAVID AND AMBUSH II. JUMP TOGETHER.

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with the proviso that he will accept no mounts before March 21st in case of a possible accident.

BUCEPHALUS.

HACKNEY HORSE SHOW.

THE eighteenth annual show of the Hackney Horse Society, which began at the Agricultural Hall last Tuesday, was the means of attracting a total entry of 493, of which 219 were stallions, 114 mares, 94 geldings, and 66 harness horses; the stallion entry showing an increase of 11, and the geldings of 35, whilst the mares were fewer by 29 and the harness horses by 8. No doubt the reduction in the mare entry is in a great measure due to the fact that most of the best-looking show animals are in the hands of a limited number of exhibitors, and in consequence the owners of some excellent breeding stock do not care to show against them; but the falling off is none the less regrettable. The show, however, proved a most interesting one.

The first class to come up for judgment at the unholy hour of 9 a.m. were the yearling stallions, which were a rather feeble lot of 11, though the winner, Mr. W. Richardson's Bonwick Rosador, is a fine high mover, and should grow into a stallion of merit some day, his successor, Mr. Alfred Willis's Irvington, being likewise smart, though he might be bigger. Two year olds showed considerable improvement, the winner, Mr. A. A. Haley's Danegelt Royal, bearing a strong resemblance to his sire Royal Danegelt, added to which he knows the way to use his joints; in fact, he is a very valuable young horse. At the same time, in the opinion of a number of good judges of harness horses, the third prize winner, Mr. Arthur Colleen's bay Walden Squire John, was the finest mover, and, therefore, better entitled to premier honours, and he certainly is a grand sort. Three year olds were a fair average lot of 21, but the judging excited some criticism, as Mr. Wrench's Fitz Rose was pretty generally voted the superior Hackney to Mr. Ford's Kimberley, though the latter made a brilliant show, whilst the Irish horse looked a little dull. So far as the four year olds are concerned, it may be said that perhaps a better collection of 42 animals of the age has never yet

BOOKS OF . THE DAY.

EVER since Elia showed the way, in his essay on the South Sea House, the praise of the humours and whimsicalities of old clerks has

been a favourite form both of writing and reading. Old Government clerks for choice; not because they are intrinsically more attractive than other clerks, more humorous, or eccentric, but because we (however erroneously) are in the habit of expecting merely dryasdust formality from Government officials, and the discovery of geniality and amusing oddity is thus the more welcome, just as a humorous article in a serious paper is more likely to make its way than a humorous article in a paper labelled comic. Sir Edward Hertslet, however, in his *Recollections of the Old Foreign Office* (Murray), does not, as Lamb did in his recollections of the old South Sea House, put human nature first and public matters second. On the contrary, his real object is to tell the history of the Foreign Office for the past fifty years, or during his own period of service there; but human nature will out, even in Downing Street, and the book remains in the mind as another contribution to the literature of the lighter side of officialdom.

Lord Palmerston, who, though not nominally a clerk, was yet as Secretary for Foreign Affairs only a clerk carried out to the highest power, is the hero of this volume; and that being the case, its longevity is assured. Where there is Pam there is life. Generations to come will, we fancy, be as interested in stories of Lord Palmerston as of any public man of the Victorian epoch. Sir Edward Hertslet's Palmerston stories are very characteristic, if somewhat trivial—trivial, that is, in the sense that they do not involve to any extent affairs of State; but not trivial to the biographical mind. They show him principally as the strict, yet facetious, critic of subordinates, the foe to bad handwriting, prolixity, and indifferent punctuation. In ordinary life men may write as they please—and only too many do so—

but servants of the Queen are expected to be legible. True that the best interests of diplomacy may on occasion, it is conceivable, be served by a cryptic hand. One can imagine the lucky star of the British shining auspiciously upon some momentous Note which no one could decipher, and suggesting a reading in our ultimate favour. But legibility is, in most cases, of the highest importance; and Lord Palmerston, however a document might leave the Foreign Office, insisted on it reaching it in a lucid form.

His rebukes were pathetically wistful now and then. One consul had complained in a letter of his sufferings from fleas in his official lodgings. But he went the wrong way to draw sympathy from Palmerston's heart. He wrote his tale of woe in a slovenly hand. The Secretary for Foreign Affairs merely remarked on the back: "Living with his fleas can hardly be worse than reading his handwriting." On another despatch he wrote: "Reading Mr. R——'s handwriting is like running penknives into one's eyes." On another: "Has the writer of this letter lost the use of his right hand? If not, why does he make all his letters slope backwards like the raking masts of an American schooner?" An alternative simile was "iron railings leaning out of the perpendicular." One Mr. W—— had the following concise rules for calligraphy placed before him: "Tell Mr. W——, in a 'Separate,' that the person who copies out his despatches should form his letters by connecting his slanting down strokes by visible lines at top or bottom according to the letters which he intends his parallel lines to represent."

Ink also distressed his Lordship. Mr. Bulwer (afterwards Lord Dalling), when at Madrid, was asked to rewrite a certain pale and ghostly despatch, and at the same time to inform the department where he got his ink. Punctuation, which even the best intellects treat with disdain, also troubled Lord Palmerston. On a batch of unstopped minutes being sent for signature he wrote: "Write to the Stationery Office for a sufficient supply of full-stops, semi-colons, and commas; but more especially semi-colons, for the use of the copying clerks of the office; I furnish these things out of my own private stores when I have time to look over despatches for signature, but I am not always sufficiently at leisure to supply deficiencies." It is possible that type-writers are now in full tick at the Foreign Office and half the old difficulties are over. But it may not be so. Modern improvements on their way to Government offices so often find the road up.

Some of the officials of less degree furnish good stories, too. We like the episode of Mr. Lenox-Conyngham and the Quaker. In Sir Edward Hertslet's words: "A Quaker one day called upon him at the Foreign Office to make some enquiry. It was probably on one of his bad days; and when suffering, he was not very particular as to the language which he used, even to strangers. After some little conversation had passed between them, the Quaker put the finger of his right hand up, reproachfully, and addressing Mr. Conyngham, said, 'Thou hast taken the Name of the Lord in vain thrice'; and he then handed him a little tract, headed, 'The Swearer's Oath.' Mr. Conyngham was not at all offended at this, but calmly rang his bell, and when the office messenger arrived, he said, 'Take this paper down to the bookbinder and tell him to mount it on a piece of cardboard for me.' He then told the Quaker that he would put it on his mantelpiece, as a caution to his friends, when they visited him, not to swear." There is also a pleasing record of Mr. Hammond, late Permanent Under-Secretary, expecting an illustrious Chinese Minister, and being confronted in his room just before the hour appointed by a pig-tailed stranger. Mr. Hammond, on rising to do him honour, was greeted with the words, in a whining tone, "Me velly poor; me velly hungry; me no home." But of the non-Palmerstonian humours the best is the obituary notice of one of those ornamental officials, who are by no means confined to Government offices, but who perhaps flourish there in their most profuse luxuriance. The memorial ran thus:

"In Memory of

Who departed this Official Life on the 30th March, 1875.

Scrupulous in the avoidance of every duty, he gracefully escaped the obligations of this transitory life. Regarding virtue as a thing beyond price, he was careful not to degrade it by practice. His mind was a storehouse of knowledge of which he had lost the key; and in finally paying the debt of nature, he left to his sorrowing friends the consolation of meeting his other liabilities.

PAX NOBIS."

There is style there.

No writer on the Foreign Office would be doing his duty if he did not give at least one instance of red tapery. Sir Edward Hertslet's example is of a bad odour in the basement, which led to an order being given to a workman to examine the drains in the passage. The workman, knowing perfectly well that the drains were elsewhere situated, brought his weapons and made the required excavation, replying, when asked why he did this so far from the real position of the drain, that those were his orders. Readers acquainted with this kind of story will not need to be told that the offence arose from the late office cat, which was silently decomposing behind the bound volume of the *Times* which had crushed out its nine lives. But against this abuse of red tape Sir Edward Hertslet has the admirable recollection of yards of

that material being employed to pull up pottles of strawberries to the younger clerks in the hot weather. And with this pretty humanising reminiscence, so foreign to the ordinary conception of Foreign Office routine, we leave a very entertaining volume.

E. V. LUCAS.

UNTIL I had read the *Monthly Review* of March I had been under the impression that for some years past it would have been possible to include COUNTRY LIFE within the category of the weekly Press. Now, assuming the *Monthly Review* to be right in an anonymous article, I find that I am glad to be wrong. For this gentleman or lady excludes COUNTRY LIFE and scourges all the other papers in the most unmerciful way, mainly, so far as I can see, because they devote a considerable portion of their space to political matters; and that presumably they do because they find that their constituents are interested in such matters. "Excepting a few that give themselves specially to reviews of current art (like the *Academy*), to current literature (like the *Athenaeum*), to church questions (like the *Guardian*), or to fashion (like the *World and Truth*), the whole array of them are mainly political, little more than protracted editions of daily newspapers." One may venture to express amused gratitude that this writer has condescended to go into detail, for by so doing he gives himself away. The *Academy* is not specially devoted to reviews of current art; the *Athenaeum* is more interested than the *Academy* in art, the *Guardian* is a paper of catholic tastes—using the word "catholic" in the proper sense—and the sentence about the *World and Truth*—notably in its reference to *Truth*—is about as absurdly wrong as it is possible for a sentence to be. Addison, perhaps, was a little highfalutin' in his dedication of the original *Spectator* to John Lord Somers. "None but a person of finished character can be the proper patron of a work which endeavours to cultivate and polish human life by promoting virtue and knowledge and recommending whatsoever may be either useful or ornamental to society." But, really, supposing one could find a person to whom to address such words as those, it is hardly fair to say: "No editor of a weekly, now alive and retaining a sense of truth, could possibly use such expressions about his periodical." The editor of COUNTRY LIFE could. In fact, the whole article gives one the impression of having been written simply to annoy, "because he knows it teases." An uncommonly sensible article is that of Mr. Julian S. Corbett on "Education in the Navy." Mr. Corbett takes a good deal of space to say that which every naval officer knows perfectly well, that of which naval instructors, lay and clerical, are painfully conscious—to wit, that the opportunities for continuing the education of midshipmen are sadly too few. No one who has lived on board a man-of-war, especially on board a first-class cruiser of other than the largest dimensions, can cease to wonder that, apart from practical work, the average midshipman ever picks up anything at all. For between duties, sea-sickness of himself or the naval instructor, absence of any place for preparation of lessons and any place for teaching, he is in a sad case indeed; and the matter is certainly one that wants looking to. The concluding piece in the *Monthly Review*, being the beginning of a story called "Danny," by Alfred Ollivant, has been a severe disappointment to me. Mr. Ollivant's *Owd Bob* is as good a book as was ever written; but "Danny," written mostly in the form of a dialogue, and about a naughty deerhound pup, completely failed to get hold of me in the course of twenty pages, although I entered upon it with the confident assurance of delight to come. The gem of the number is contained in some verses addressed by Robert Bridges to Robert Burns, and entitled "An Epistle on Instinct," of which the first stanza contains the kernel of the whole matter:

"Thou art a poet, Robbie Burns,
Master of words and witty turns,
Of lilting songs and merry yarns,
Drinking and kissing:
There's much in all thy small concerns,
But more that's missing."

The *Fortnightly*, take it for all in all, is heavy. Serious persons will read an article on "Free Trade or Protection for England," by John Beattie Crozier, and the following one by J. A. Hobson, of which the title is enough to make Co den turn in his grave, for that title is nothing less than "The Approaching Abandonment of Free Trade." Mr. Fred T. Jane causes me more amusement than he intended by an essay entitled "The Navy: Is All Well?" The sum of the whole matter is that the public very rarely knows the truth about anything naval, and that we must trust the Admiralty, because there is nothing else to trust, and that Mr. Jane trusts the Admiralty, which, of course, is all right. But really he ought not to write sentences like this: "On the whole, things are fairly well with the Navy so far as I can glimpse its inside." There is some force, however, in his reference to Mr. Arnold-Forster. It is true that in times past Mr. Arnold-Forster was the chief of the agitators on things naval. It is equally true, probably—at least I have often heard naval officers say so—that in times past Mr. Arnold-Forster's inner knowledge of the Navy was hardly elementary. It is equally true that he now appears to be contented, and yet Mr. Arnold-Forster is undoubtedly an honest man. Now that he can not merely "glimpse things naval" from the inside, but study them in full knowledge, his contentment is perhaps more consoling than that of Mr. Fred. T. Jane. Many people will read with interest Mr. H. Hamilton Fyfe's concluding article in the *Fortnightly* on organising the theatre, and the time has really almost come when the mere taxpayer must begin to take these advocates of a State theatre seriously. At first their talk was harmless enough, but now there does really seem some reason to fear that they may effect something; and I can conceive nothing more unjust or more unnecessary than a State theatre. Why on earth should the people of Caithness, or Donegal, or Cornwall, or Pembrokeshire be compelled to pay for theatres located in the middle of crowded districts which would probably not be self-supporting? Certainly not because there is any hope that by giving this artificial stimulus the writing of better plays might be brought about. For there does not seem any present likelihood that any moderns will touch Shakespeare or Sheridan, or, for that matter, Robertson either. All these vigorous plants of the drama were nourished outside a forcing-house, and hence, perhaps, comes their robust and enduring constitution.

In *The Scenery of England* (Macmillan) Lord Avebury has produced a volume which, having regard to its subject and its object, is as light and entertaining as it is possible for it to be. That, of course, is what everybody expected. Sir John Lubbock touched no subject without adorning it, and, oddly enough, Lord Avebury is every whit as charming as was Sir John Lubbock. Still, it must be confessed that the weight of the subject succeeds on

the whole, in diminishing the accustomed buoyancy of the writer. Fundamentally the subject is geology, or the geography of the past, and the object of the book is to show us the precise manner in which various pieces of scenery with which we are familiar have been evolved by geological process. Lord Avebury takes a given scene—Charnwood Forest, for example—and reads its history as from the open pages of a book; and there is not a chapter in this substantial volume that will not appeal to many readers. It is interesting to note the increasing importance given to subaerial denudation, and the lesser effect attributed to marine action, in this, as in all other modern explanations of the phenomena of scenery. A very interesting chapter, also, is that in which is traced the influence ancient tenures and systems—as, for example, that of Borough English and Lammas Lands—have exercised upon the face of the country. The fields and hedges, hedgerow timber, and winding country lanes which are characteristic of English scenery, have their origin in the history of land tenure; and, incidentally, our system of land measurement has its explanation in old tenures. An acre was the amount which a team of oxen were supposed to plough in a day; it was not until the time of Edward I. that it was fixed as a furlong in length, and four poles in breadth. A furlong, again, is the distance which a team of oxen could plough conveniently without stopping to rest. A pole or perch represents the length of the goad carried by the ploughman of old times, which was 16½ ft. The well-defined terraces, known as "lynchets," of chalk districts are the marks of ancient cultivation, and so on. I cannot be said that Lord Avebury's book is light reading, but it can be said that, after reading it, he who takes his walks abroad in the country will have a far greater appreciation than heretofore of the meaning of familiar objects and well-known landmarks.

If it be necessary to write elaborate treatises on individual plays of Shakespeare, then Mr. Michael Macmillan's *Julius Caesar* (Methuen) may be commended for the use of Sixth Forms, as being more complete than most books of the kind. In it Shakespeare is treated as Conington treated Virgil—that is to say, there is a long introduction, and there are plenty of footnotes of the most elaborate kind. Personally, however, I am inclined to be of opinion that Shakespeare, like the classical writers of antiquity, has suffered much from his commentators, whose laborious explanations are, to use the language of the saltern, liable "to put one off." Here, for example, is a passage which caused my perfectly ordinary mind no difficulty:

"Let me have men about me that are fat,
Sleek-headed men and such as sleep a' nights.
Yond Cassius has a lean and hungry look.
He thinks too much; such men are dangerous."

Upon this perfectly simple passage there are no less than fifty-four lines of closely printed notes, one of which I believe to be wrong. "Sleek-headed men," we are told, are "men with smooth, glossy, unwrinkled faces." After all, why on earth should not Shakespeare be permitted to mean what he said—to wit, that sleek-headed men are men with sleek heads?

Two very charming little volumes contain *Marriage*, by Susan Ferrier (Methuen), with no end of introductory matter by Mr. A. Goodrich Freer and the Earl of Iddesleigh. Here again the author suffers somewhat from the commentator. Mr. Goodrich Freer's biographical preface is interesting in its way; but, after all, Mr. J. A. Doyle's memoir told us long ago all that we wanted to know about her who has been rightly described as the Scotch Miss Austen. For the critical part, which is supplied by Lord Iddesleigh, it must be said, with all reluctance, that it is a trifle dull. As for *Marriage* itself, it is perfectly easy to read without any notes at all; and although Miss Ferrier was always somewhat prone to over-indulge her didactic mood, the flashes of quiet humour are more than a sufficient compensation.

"It is not surprising to find that Mr. Montgomery Carmichael's *In Tuscany* (John Murray), originally published in January, 1901, and reprinted in March, has now gone into a second edition. It consists of a series of light-hearted sketches or essays on Tuscan types and scenery by one who, in an official capacity, has spent his life among the Tuscans. Mr. Carmichael is a close observer, a philosopher—pretty much of the type of Horace—and a distinctly elegant writer. And if his essays leave us not very much wiser than we were before reading them, at least they leave us in good humour.

It is a curious coincidence that *Esmond*, in Messrs. Macmillan's edition of Thackeray, which is at once new and old and delightful, should reach my hands at the same moment as *Audrey*, by Mary Johnston (Constable), in the most

dramatic scene of which Colonel Esmond of Castlewood is one of the Governor's party in the pit of a theatre in Virginia. Of *Esmond*, emphatically the best novel ever written by Thackeray, and that, to me, is the same thing as the best novel ever written, there is naturally nothing fresh to be said. Of *Audrey* it is to be hoped that there may be an opportunity in the future of speaking at considerable length. Good work as the author had already done in "By Order of the Company" and "The Old Dominion," there is no doubt, in my mind, that in this tragedy, for tragedy it is, in spite of some early comedy, she has touched the high-water mark of excellence. The tone of the society of old Virginia, high and low, the chivalrous manners of the better class of planters, the hard case of the Jacobite convicts, who were proud gentlemen, the fierce, untameable nature of the half-breeds, are brought before the reader with a vivid fidelity which is simply masterly. The character-drawing, too, is superb; in a word, the book is so far above the ordinary run, and so much better than any previous work done by the author, that it must be reserved for special treatment. Meanwhile, wise men and women will buy and read it; emphatically it is a book not merely worth reading, but also worth keeping. Further, the illustrations by F. C. Vohn, which are coloured, are of a quality very far above the ordinary, and this to me, one still boy enough to be helped by pictures in realising the true meaning, or at any rate a true meaning, of a book, is a great delight.

There is a good deal of quiet charm about *The Making of a Country Home*, by J. P. Mowbray (Constable), which is a plain record of an ordinary man, and his experience and success in his efforts to make a home for himself in the country in the United States. John Dennison is a man employed in a business establishment in New York on a salary of 2,400 dollars a year, without the smallest chance of rising, and possessed of rather a nice wife. Growing weary of town life, he saves hard for two years, and then moves to the country and makes his own little place bit by bit, succeeding eventually in producing something very like an ideal home, while his wife has alternate fits of contentment and discontent, the former prevailing when she realises how happy she is, and the latter coming to the surface when her friend Kate, who is very much of a third-rate city butterfly, asks her to go and stay with her in town. The whole story will be put down by many as a chronicle of small beer, but to those who have experience in the difficulties and the fascination of getting a country home together, its very simplicity will be its chief delight, and they will sympathise with John Dennison in his triumph in constructing an underground cistern in a thirsty land, and in his pride over his many small horticultural successes. The only thing that strikes the practical man is that John Dennison either had a great deal more free time than is usually given to the employés of a business house, or that he made extraordinarily good use of it. Also, it must be admitted that he had exceptional luck in securing ideal servants. Things may be different in America, but in England John would have been extremely lucky to secure either Tilka, the Norwegian maid of all work, who could do everything, or her husband, Mart, who was nearly as useful as she was. To secure both was to have incredible good fortune. For me, this American-Arcadian book is an endless delight, because it bears the impress of truth, and because the author frankly professes a hope and a purpose, as an ordinary and thrifty man who desires to stimulate other ordinary men to follow his example, and to make for themselves a simple home in the country instead of sweltering in the towns by night as well as by day. Finally, this account of his struggles is readable, because he has a really strong sense of quiet humour.

THEIR MAJESTIES AT MOUNT EDGCUMBE.

THE visit which King Edward and Queen Alexandra are paying to the West of England is truly a very important Royal progress. They go to lay the foundation-stone of a new Naval College, to launch one battleship and lay the keel-plate of another, to visit the Naval Engineering College, and to decorate men who have gallantly

served their country by gallant acts. The visit to Mount Edgcumbe, the stately seat of the Earl of Mount Edgcumbe, forms a pleasant interlude. One of the noblest seats in the West, its superb situation, its commanding position, and its unrivalled outlook over Plymouth Sound, give Mount Edgcumbe character and distinction such as few houses possess. Such a place must needs have a stirring history, for the famous waters below have witnessed many great events in the annals of England. The builder was Sir Richard Edgcumbe, whose father, Sir Piers, had won his knighthood in the Battle of the Spurs. The work went on in Mary's reign, and a strong central tower, embattled and with turrets, goes back to that age, though within many changes have passed over it, and without a larger and more imposing structure has grown.

When Drake played his famous game of bowls on



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THE HOUSE FROM THE SOUTH-EAST.

"COUNTRY LIFE."

Plymouth Hoe, he looked up sometimes to the wooded height beyond the Sound. An old story runs that the Duke of Medina Sidonia, when he set eyes on Mount Edgcumbe, marked it as a place, when England should be conquered, whereon it would be pleasant to dwell. If ever he made that reflection, it was a tribute to his good judgment, but, as the world knows, the English seamen were too much for the brave but incompetent Spaniard, and Drake's confidence was justified. "I doubt it not," he wrote to Walsingham, "but ere it be long so to handle the matter with the Duke of Sidonia as he shall wish himself among his own orange trees." From that day to this the dwellers at Mount Edgcumbe have witnessed the coming and going of countless ships of the Royal Navy. In the Civil War, Sir Piers Edgcumbe, a Royalist colonel, withstood a fierce attack of the Parliament men on his house in May, 1644, and held out long afterwards, suffering much for the cause, but Mount Edgcumbe happily was saved.

attractions of the place are largely due to them, though their successors still further adorned their much-prized possession. The house is rich in beautiful family portraits by Lely, Reynolds, and others, including one of the Royalist, Sir Piers, and is adorned by a very fine collection of lovely china.

The park and gardens are such as befit so great a seat. From the high land of the former there is a grand outlook over the Devon and Cornish coasts, and the Eddystone Lighthouse is seen far away at sea. The woods are magnificent and the fruit of much judicious planting, though they have suffered in many a gale. A beautiful drive along the park edge, with its glorious upland on one hand, and the sea on the other, is specially attractive, and brings the delighted visitor to an umbrageous amphitheatre, where he pauses at "Milton's Temple," amid cedars and magnolias, and many a beautiful tree and flower, to read the poet's lines:

"Overhead up-grew
Insurmountable height of loftiest shade,
Cedar and fir, and branching palm;
A sylvan scene, and, as the ranks
ascend,
Shade after shade, a woody theatre
Of stateliest view."

The author of "Paradise Lost" thus aptly described a scene he never beheld. From the beauties of the park the visitor may turn to discover other charms in the classic gardens, where the gods of ancient Rome, with unchanging gaze, seem as if they could not but admire. There are English, Italian, and French gardens, all beautiful and radiant. Not at this time of the year are they seen at their best, but the flowers of spring are in plenty. Here, in the English, in the kindly sunshine, grow palms, magnolias, camellias, and things that flourish much in warmer climes. The Italian garden has its dark evergreens and cool recesses, and Apollo, Venus, and a Faun, from classic examples, fall appropriately into the picture.

To describe Mount Edgcumbe further is unnecessary. It is honoured in the Royal visit, and henceforth, as the historian records how Elizabeth, or James, or Charles, or one of the Georges visited this great house or that, so shall he record the pride of Mount Edgcumbe when King Edward and Queen Alexandra were received within its walls.

ON THE GREEN.

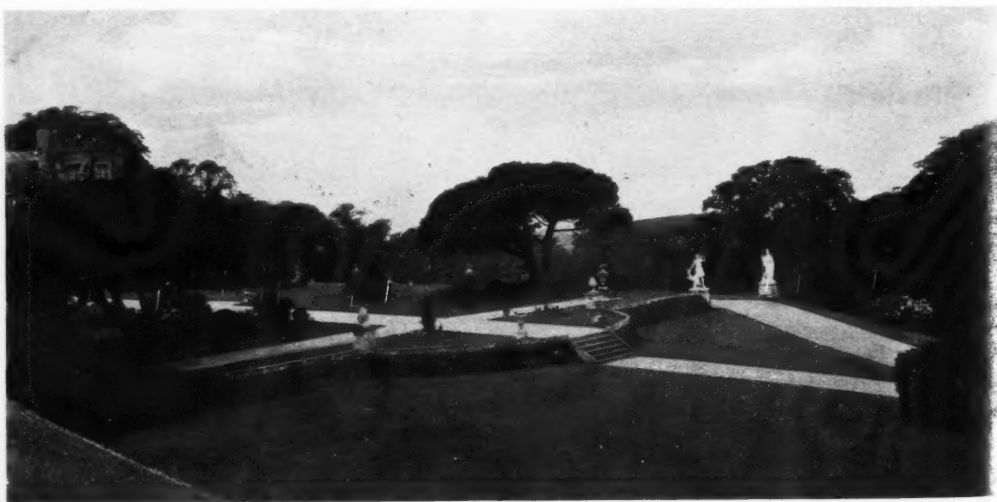
THERE is, I think, at least one good point about the international match which is to take place at Hoylake—it will give a good preliminary canter to some of those at the tail end of either team who have not been much accustomed to play what are called, rather grandiloquently, "important matches." This is not said at all with the



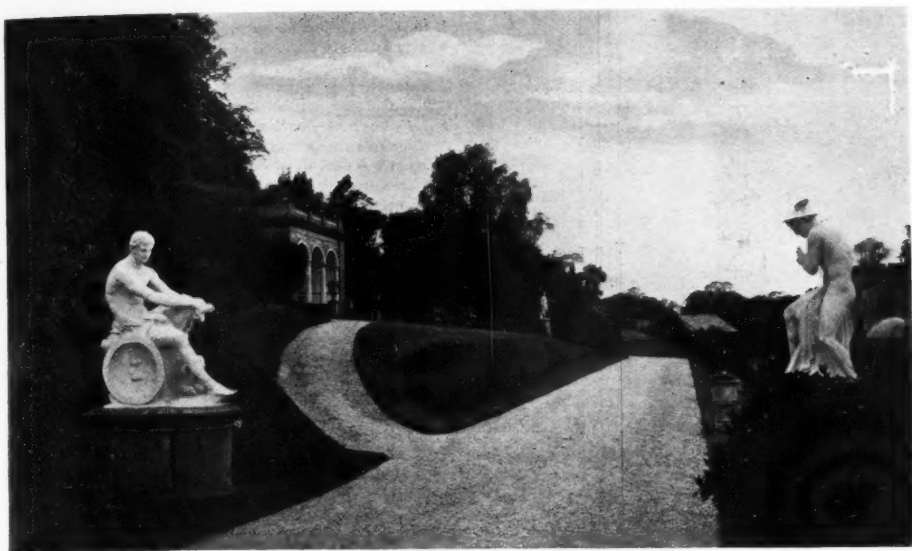
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The old blockaders were accustomed to bear up for Cawsand Bay under the hill to make good repairs, and many a time the outward bound would lie there awaiting a favourable breeze. What an inspiring outlook is there now! The broad waters of the Hamoaze, the busy presence of Devonport Dockyard and of Keyham, the Victualling Yard, all Plymouth stretched along the land behind the Hoe, Drake's Island a prominent object, Staddon and the great breakwater! These would be enough, but they are not all, for the Sound is ever full of life and movement, and the interest never fails in the ships that come and go. A strong fort now commands the Narrows, where guns were placed to forbid the passage to the Spaniards, and where the first Earl of Mount Edgcumbe, who was port admiral, mounted pieces later on which had been taken out of a captured French frigate. Here it is that royal and other salutes are fired, and there are other batteries in the park and woods.

The Earl of Mount Edgcumbe's house is a fine quadrangular structure, with great octagonal towers at the angles, and the older edifice in the midst. Spaciousness is in its character, and its interior is bright and beautiful. The saloon is a noble apartment, with marble columns supporting a music gallery, and possesses very classic busts. On the east front, with a magnificent prospect over Plymouth Sound from its windows, is the great drawing-room, with many noble pictures, and an unusual panelled ceiling. Then the dining-room, being oval, has an unusual aspect, and the library and other rooms are all of stately and yet of homelike character. The first and second Earls of Mount Edgcumbe, about a century ago, added much to the older house, and the modern charms and



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MOUNT EDGCUMBE: THE GARDEN-HOUSE. "COUNTRY LIFE."

intention of suggesting that the match has not many other merits of its own, but this incidental one is the more worth mentioning because it is rather likely to be overlooked. It has been a very common observation that it is curious how the high places in the championship (of amateurs, at least) are occupied again and again for a number of years by more or less repetition of the old familiar names. Surprise is often expressed that new and young players do not come forward more prominently and more frequently. Is not the reason very largely that they have not had experience of the "important match," that the greatness of the occasion rather overawes them and prevents them from showing their true powers? I think this is much more true than that their true powers are not equal to the occasion. Hoylake people will not have forgotten (and after his extraordinary run of subsequent success it is not ungenerous to recall it) how long it was before Mr. John Ball did himself anything like justice on any other green than his native Hoylake. Probably it was not the strangeness of other greens, but the strangeness of other surroundings, of a "gallery" of strangers, that disconcerted him. Among the first bids for fame that J. H. Taylor ever made was a tournament match with Archie Simpson at Westward Ho. At that time Taylor was not much more than a boy working on the green. But he got three up on Simpson. This was reported. A "gallery" attached itself to the match, and Taylor was flurried out of his game. He has had bigger "galleries" since without getting flurried. Likely enough it is a similar flurry that disturbs the nerves of the young players, and players who have not achieved fame yet, in the championship. The preliminary international match will help to get some of them over their flurry. At least it seems likely. The delightful thing will be if the championship is won by a player not selected by either side, but it will be a joke rather against the selectors.

Rumours are rife, but contradictory, about our great players who are going touring in America. The prevalent idea is that Braid, Vardon, and Taylor all are going over after the open championship, but the last is said to be going on business, strictly, and not golfing. Even of the two others it is said that they do not mean to go unless a good series of matches is arranged for them previously to starting. But if the Americans once get these three across the water at the same time, it will be very curious if they do not bring them together in some exhibition matches. Taylor's style is such a fine contrast to that of the two others—indeed, the styles of all three are different enough—that it would be worth their while to take the chance of arranging a meeting, or many meetings. Mr. Travis, the American amateur, is going to take part in the amateur championship here this year. So, at least, report has it; but often rumour not only flies, but lies.

HORACE HUTCHINSON.

CORRESPONDENCE

FISH AND HORSES.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]

SIR,—Are we not a strange people? You refer to the conviction of a fishmonger for cruelty to carp through insufficiency of water. Yet that fishmonger's next customer may drive up behind a horse suffering from a cruelly tight bearing-rein, and the magistrates won't convict. The horse's intelligence and consequent susceptibility to pain are on a far higher level than the carp's, but he may be tortured, the fish may not.—HANDLEY CROSS.

THE BUILDING BYE-LAWS.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]

SIR,—There is a point in regard to the Model Bye-laws for rural districts to which attention ought to be called. As a result of the agitation you carried out so consistently the old bye-laws were withdrawn and a new set drawn up. The latter, barring one or two minor flaws, are thoroughly satisfactory, and a notable improvement on those that have been replaced. Nevertheless, the expected effect is not being produced. Unfortunately the local bodies are under no compulsion to adopt the new bye-laws, and comparatively few have done so. Few of the members recognise the importance of doing so. As is well known, they are mostly local tradesmen, butchers, bakers, drapers, and the like, who have not taken the trouble to understand the importance of the changes made. It would be of little use to blame them. They are engrossed in their own business of one kind or another, and inclined

to be a little contemptuous of what they call the merely picturesque. Besides, they are actuated by smaller motives. The District Council in my own neighbourhood refused to adopt the new bye-laws for the sapient reason that it would involve the expense of printing and publication! Under these circumstances it behoves those who were instrumental in bringing about the change to see to it that their efforts are not rendered futile by local apathy and ignorance. The Local Government Board are powerless. An official of standing whom I consulted replied that his board were most anxious that the new bye-laws should be adopted, but they possessed no power of compulsion over the local bodies. The only thing that can be done is for those of taste and enlightenment to agitate locally and bring all their influence to bear on the rural authorities. It is not advisable to base the argument only on the need of preserving the picturesque. What appeals more to the average village politician is the fact that by the removal of so many harassing restrictions building can now be done more cheaply and easily. There is, for instance, no longer any rule rendering it compulsory to use "hard and incombustible" material for roofing, and thus the erection of thatched cottages has once more become possible and practicable. So with many other regulations. Architects, landowners,

and others would be well advised to obtain a copy of the new bye-laws, which they may get in the usual manner from Messrs. Eyre and Spottiswood, the official printers, and demonstrate to their friends and neighbours the alterations that have been made by comparing them with the old clause by clause. I am sure I need not dwell here on the advisability of doing this energetically. If the amendment of these obnoxious regulations was worth the trouble taken to secure it, no pains should be spared to make that appeal effective.—ARCHITECT.

WILD HORSES AT THE ZOO.

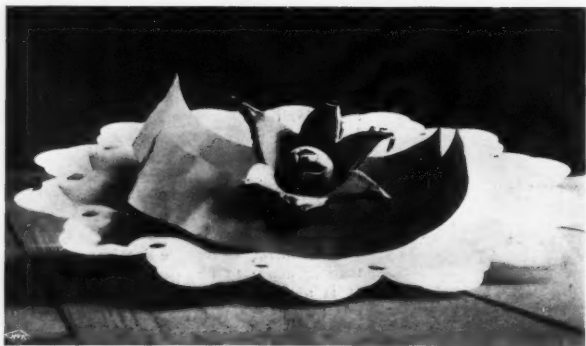
[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]

SIR,—The four young wild horses from the deserts of Dzungaria were to be seen eating their first meal of oats at the Zoo this morning (Saturday, March 1st). They were placed in temporary quarters in the giraffes' paddock, in a shed covered at the back and ends, and with ordinary iron railings in front. All four were none the worse for their journey by sea and rail from Hamburg so far as appetite went, but eagerly thrust their muzzles into the box of oats, and when one pair had finished their share they stretched their heads over the partition which divided the two pairs to see if they could reach any of the others' portion. In fact, they seemed perfectly tame and gentle, like ponies that have been lying rough all the winter. Much interest and curiosity has been excited as to these "wild horses," and very naturally so, because they come from the primitive and little-known solitudes near to the first centre of dispersion of part of the human race, in which alone in the world of to-day it was at least probable, judging merely from *a priori* knowledge, that the original of the horse might still be found. Practically no European ever goes to these places in the way of business, and very few even as explorers, while in these cold deserts there is so little game as not to attract sportsmen. In addition to the absence of positive knowledge, a difficulty of the negative kind comes in. There is a large native wild ass, the kiang, shaggy coated, with ears much smaller in proportion than those of the domestic donkey, in these same desert steppes. It has the same habits as feral horses, though it brays and does not neigh. The celebrated naturalist Brehm, looking probably on all the equine race as "horses," calls it "the wild horse" in the eulogistic description of it which he gave in the story of his travels from the North Pole to the Equator. Also none of the original authorities for the existence of a wild horse are satisfactory evidence that those undoubtedly found on some of the steppes of Europe and Asia were not horses which had run wild. The "wild horse of the Ukraine" was held by local tradition to be descended from those which were left to run wild during the Russian siege of Azov. These of the Asiatic steppes were apparently (for the accounts are very unsatisfactory) seen where there were also droves of half-tame horses. They might be no more wild than the bronchos of America. Some animals captured by two Russian travellers in the locality indicated by Prejvalski looked very like kiangs (wild asses), though their ears were shorter, and the questions were: (1) Would Mr. Hagenbach's "wild horses" turn out to be "wild asses"? (2) If they were horses, would they prove to be the "original"? No one who looks at those at the Zoo will have a moment's doubt as to No. 1. They are true horses of a very pleasing class. All four are true to type—a very important fact. They have short, well-bred-looking ears, by no means too large heads (being much better-looking than the badly-bred Baltic ponies which come to Harwich), true-falling manes, legs and feet of the horse type, and that important item, the hair of the tail so nearly springing from the commencement that it would not take many years of breeding to get the tails like those of ordinary horses. The colour is always described as "dun," and might be so if they were clipped, but as the coats are long and shaggy the colour is far darker and richer than dun. They have also four "warts" on the leg, whereas asses only have two. They are, in fact, horses "all round." As to the second question, whether they are the original "wild" horse or relapsed specimens, much must depend upon the place they come from, and whether they are "isolated" there, or whether they "merge" into troops of horses known to be only "e capes." Here, as they say in the children's game, "we are getting warm." The place where they were caught is south of Kobdo, close to the great Atlas Mountains, and pretty nearly in the centre of the continent of Asia. It is also almost exactly on the same parallel of longitude (90), the district in which Prejvalski maintained they would be found, and in the region of Dzungaria whence he obtained the skins. It is a place of surpassing wildness and desolation, and it is in any case well within the bounds of probability that these horses may be genuine survivals, though, on the contrary, local evidence may be forthcoming that they are not.—C. J. CORNISH.

A QUIANT FUNGUS.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]

SIR,—I send you a photograph of the Geaster mamosa which was found in the woods here for the first time last autumn. I should like to know



if it is rare, and where else it is found.—R. B. MARTIN, Overbury Court, Tewkesbury.

[We shall be very pleased to hear from anyone who has found this fungus elsewhere.—ED.]

BELFRY VERSES.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]

SIR,—Observing in your issue for February 22nd the belfry verses in All Saints' Church, Hastings, reminded me of some similar ones in old Dartmoor churches, which may interest your readers.—S. W. EASTON, Malden Road, Watford.

In the belfry of Drewsteignton Church :

"THE RINGERS' ARTICLES.

I.

Whoever in this place shall swear,
Sixpence he shall pay therefore.

II.

He that ring here in his hat,
Threepence he shall pay for that.

III.

Who overturns a bell, be sure
Threepence he shall pay therefore.

IV.

Who leaves his rope under feet,
Threepence he shall pay for it.

V.

A good ringer and a true heart
Will not refuse to stand a quart.

VI.

Who will not to these rules agree
Shall not belong to this belfrie.

JOHN HOLE, Warden."

In the belfry of Buckland Church, near Tavistock :

"We ring the quick to church, the dead to grave;
Good is our use, such usage let us have;
Who swears, curs'ly, or in choleric mood
Quarrels or strikes, altho' he sheds no blood;
Who wears his hat, or spurs, or turns a bell,
Or by unskillful handling mairs a peal,
Let him pay sixpence for each single crime,
'Twill make him cautious against another time.
Now round let's go, and when we've done let's sing
God bless our Holy Church, God save the King.
17 Amen. 55."

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]

SIR,—Having read the letter under the above heading in your issue for February 22nd, I have thought that the accompanying verses may also be of interest. They are copied from boards hanging in the belfries respectively of Landulph, Cornwall; Westbury, Salop; and Tideswell, Derbyshire (the cathedral of the Peak).—ROLAND T. MOLE, 33, Westfield Road, Edgbaston, Birmingham.

Verses in the belfry of Landulph Church, Cornwall :

"Let awful silence first proclaimed be,
And praise unto the Holy Trinity;
Then honour give unto our noble King,
So with a blessing let us raise this ring.
Hark how the chirping treble sings most clear,
And covering Tom comes rowling in the rear;
And now the bells are up, come let us see
What laws are best to keep sobriety.
Who swears or curses or in choleric mood
Quarrels or strikes, altho' he draw no blood,
Who wears his hat or spur, or o'eturns a bell,
Or by unskillful handling mairs a peal,
Let him pay sixpence for each single crime,
'Twill make him cautious 'gainst another time
But if the Sexton's fault an hindrance be,
We call from him a double penalty.
If any should our parson disrespect,
Or Wardens' orders any time neglect
Let him be always held in full disgrace,
And ever more be banished this place;
So when the bells are ceased, then let us sing
God bless the Church—God save the King."

Verses in the belfry of Westbury Church, Salop :

"If to ring you do come here,
You must ring with hand and ear;
And if a bell you overthrow
Sixpence to pay before you go.
And if you ring with spur or hat
There's fourpence more to pay for that.
And if you either swear or curse
Twopence is due, draw out your purse.
Our laws are old, they are but few,
Therefore they ringers will have their due.
Rd. Hs."

Verses in the belfry of Tideswell Church, Derbyshire :

"All gentlemen that here intend to ring,
See that these laws you keep in everything.
When first that you into the belfry come,
See that the ringers have convenient room;
For if you be an hindrance unto them
Fourpence you forfeit unto these gentlemen.
For every oath you swear ere you go hence
You must immediately pay just sixpence.
For every bell turned ore without delay
Fourpence unto the present clerk pay.
And if that you desirous be to ring
With hat or spurs on, do not touch one string,
For if you do your forfeit is for that
Fourpence pay down, or else you lose your hat.
And if you have a mind to be inrold
A ringer here these orders you must hold."

WOODCOCK SHOOTING.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]

SIR,—It must not go out to the world that it has fallen to the lot of only one man to kill two woodcock at one shot, as might be taken to be the case if I from reticence refrained from correcting the statement to that effect of your correspondent, in his interesting article over the signature of "Argus Olive" in your issue for February 22d, page xxxiv. It fell to my lot over thirty years ago (to be exact, on November 11th, 1871) to duplicate the incident referred to, afterwards immortalised by the well-known sculptural record of its occurrence. In my case two woodcock rose simultaneously and were shot, not crossing but in line, under the cover of some trees at the foot of a wood. To add to the number of rare shots, I may say that at a much earlier period (again to be exact, on January 17th, 1850) I shot a woodcock and snipe at one shot, both also in line, in the open. The woodcock had been marked down by the side of a fresh spring, and I was told off to shoot him, and brought back the two birds as the result of my one shot. Can anyone beat this record?—EDMUND CARLYON, Polkyth, St. Austell.

AN ESSEX MOATED HOUSE

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]

SIR,—I enclose a photograph of an old moated house, situated at Dingie, near Southminster, Essex. The moat, which you will notice in the foreground of the photograph, originally ran all round the house, but years ago was filled up, for a space of about 30ft., to allow carts to get up to the house. In the front of the house the width is about 15ft., but at the back only about 8ft. The banks on three of the sides (it forms a square) are well wooded, and in places it is very deep. It is a favourite place for moorhens, and while I was using part of the house as a shooting lodge I often found their nests. I noted one curious fact while so doing. I was watching the nest during the absence of the mother. There were five newly hatched birds, and one egg not yet hatched. I saw the last break open and the little one come out. I happened to make a slight noise, and they all, the last born as well, tumbled into the water and started swimming under the banks. The house is now divided into a pair of cottages. In the sitting-room of one there is some oak panelling, of course painted over, on which is carved the date 1595. I have a 200 year old map of Essex on which the house is shown, called "The Moat." It is now known as "Peacock's Farm," a farmer of that name having occupied it during the latter part of the last century.—E. D. J., The South Cliff Club, Scarborough.



[On behalf of "Home Counties," whose letter asking for particulars of moated houses in the United Kingdom appeared in COUNTRY LIFE for February 22nd, we have to thank "E. D. J." and many correspondents for lists, and in some cases photographs, of moated houses. We shall be glad to receive more names, and will publish suitable photographs.—ED.]